

THE MURRAYS OF MURRAY HOUSE.

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I. HOW THE NEWS OF LEXINGTON CAME TO TOWN.

EIGHTY-SEVEN years ago, at which period our story begins, Philadelphia was not the vast metropolis it is now. But it was, nevertheless, the largest city in the colonies. Its commercial enterprise, its central position, its wealth, and the refinement of its inhabitants, gave a pre-eminence to it which was universally acknowledged. It was also, what it has continued to be, the handsomest of our cities. Its wide streets, stately dwellings, and long avenues of trees, were the boast of its inhabitants and the admiration of strangers.

The morning was one in the latter half of April, and though the hour was early, the whole male population seemed to be in the streets. Something of unusual importance evidently had occurred. Men stood talking in groups, with animated gestures, or hurried almost breathlessly along, stopping now and then, where they met acquaintances, to discuss the news. At the corner of Fifth and Chesnut streets, near the State House, a dense crowd had collected, which quite blocked up the highway. This crowd, however, did not seem intent on any one person: no orator was addressing it as a whole; but it was divided into a dozen, or more, groups, each listening to a different version of the intelligence, or canvassing its engrossing import. Occasionally a rush would occur, as if a one portion of this crowd had suddenly caught word of something, in another part, which it desired to hear. Additions, every moment, were being made to the mass, and from all directions. Heaving and tossing, a low hum rising from it continually, a hum which deepened and grew angrier every moment, it looked to the spectators, who watched it from the neighboring windows, like a vast ocean, gradually being lashed into fury by a rising storm.

It was at this point of time that a young man, apparently about twenty-two years of age, came walking briskly down Fifth street, looking curiously about him, in search of some acquaintance of whom he might ask an explanation of this tumult. He wore a horseman's coat, and was booted and spurred, as if he had just alighted from the saddle. In his hand he carried a light

riding-whip, with which he switched his boot impatiently. Of a medium size, lithe in figure yet muscular, with a frank, intelligent, and cultivated countenance, and wearing his dress with that air of easy unconsciousness which distinguished what were then called the gentry, he attracted very general attention.

"My good man," he said, stopping, and blandly addressing one of the crowd, whose leathern apron and shirt sleeves bespoke him a mechanic, for at that day, even in America, the dress almost invariably betokened the rank in life, "can you tell me the truth of this news? The stupid hostler, at the Black Bear, where I left my horse but now, says there has been a battle, in which our side lost a dozen or so men and the red-coats a hundred; but he doesn't know which won."

The person addressed seemed to hesitate in what words to answer, when a by-stander, who looked like a respectable shop-keeper, interposed.

"I can tell you the full truth, sir," he said, "for I heard it read out, at the Coffee House, not ten minutes ago. There's been a fight, and the patriots have whipped."

"Thank God!" ejaculated the young man; and he added eagerly, "where did it happen?"

"At a place called Lexington, a few miles out of Boston. You see, sir, the British had word there was arms and powder hid away at Concord, and so they sent a secret expedition, the other night, to destroy them. But the patriots in the city, Adams, Hancock, and the rest, got word of Gen. Gage's design, and hurried off the news to the folk in the country. The people rose, every man taking his gun, to drive back the red-coats. Just as day broke, the grenadiers reached Lexington, where they saw a dozen or so of our minute-men hastily get together on the green. Major Pitcairn, who led the grenadiers, cried out to his soldiers to fire——"

"And did they fire?"

"They did, sir."

"What? On unresisting men, without provocation?"

The eyes of the young man flashed as he

spoke, and he grasped his riding-whip convulsively, as if, were it a sufficient weapon, he would have liked to annihilate the enemy at a blow.

"Yes, sir, and killed several."

"Did our men make a stand?"

"They discharged a volley, and then, finding they were overmatched, retired."

"They fired back, did they? Huzzah!"

The exultation of the speaker communicated itself to the crowd, which broke into a huzzah also.

"Yes! huzzah," said the young man, "they boasted that they'd march, with a regiment, from one end of our country to the other. They've found out their mistake by this time."

"The red-coats," resumed the narrator, "hurried on to Concord, where they tried to destroy the stores; but the whole country was up; they found themselves surrounded; and they began a quick march to Boston. Our men hung on their rear, like hornets whose nest has been attacked, firing all the while. From behind barns, trees, stone-walls, and hedges, they blazed away, bringing down a red-coat at almost every shot. Old men and young boys, snatching muskets, joined in the chase. Half-way back to Boston, a couple of regiments came out to help the red-coats, or they would all have been made prisoners. As it was, they got off safe, except their killed, who were a hundred or more. Our minute-men followed them up to the last, and, as they went into Charlestown, played 'Yankee Doodle' after them."

"Well done," cried a sturdy smith, in the crowd. "And we'll hammer it well into 'em before the fight's over."

"This is important news," said the horseman. "You are certain it is true."

The shop-keeper was about to reply, assuring him that the narrative was correct in every particular, which, indeed, it was in the main, when a wild shout was heard up Fifth street, followed by that indiscriminate hurrying of feet which accompanies any sudden excitement in a large mob. In an instant, the thoroughfare in that direction, which had been comparatively deserted, swarmed with men and boys, some in their shirt sleeves, some hurrying on their coats as they ran. Windows were thrown up, yells rose on the air, nearer and louder came the tramp of the angry crowd. The object of this sudden commotion was not long in revealing itself. About six paces in front of the foremost of the mob, a young man, dressed in the height of the fashion, was seen running as if for his life. His hat was off, his powdered hair

disheveled, his ruffles rent, his coat nearly torn from his back. Close at his heels, and rapidly gaining on him, was the infuriated crowd, its hoarse cries of "Hang the traitor," lending new terrors to his flight at every step.

For the fugitive was plainly in mortal fear. His countenance was perfectly livid, and as he glanced around, in hopes to find a protection, and met everywhere the same hostile scowl, his eyes grew more and more distended. Once or twice he looked behind him, as if thinking to double on his pursuers, but the numbers swarming from every door and cross-street intimidated him. At last he spied the horseman. A sudden gleam of hope shot into his eyes. He rushed behind the young man, whom he seized by the arms, and whose person he interposed as a barrier between himself and the mob.

With a sudden jerk, however, the horseman threw off the fugitive.

"Oh! sir," cried the man, "save me." He was whiter than any sheet, and tried to cling to his protector.

"Hands off then," answered the other, sternly, and with a quick motion of his arm he threw the fugitive behind him, while, at the same time, he backed closer toward the wall. "And now, my men," and he turned to the pursuers, "what is the matter?"

"Matter!" cried the ringleader, "please your honor, there's matter enough. He's a tory, a tory spy. He says we Yankees are cowards, and that Adams and Hancock ought to be hung."

"Did you say that, sir?" asked the young man, turning to the trembling wretch; and he added in a whisper, "I believe I have met you before: you are Mr. Mountfort, an Englishman; but are you mad to talk as you do on a day like this?"

"For God's sake," cried Mountfort, not heeding this remark, "tell them anything: they'll believe you, they won't believe me. They'll tear me to pieces."

This colloquy, rapid as it was, had not tended to appease the wrath of the pursuers. They had drawn back, for a moment, but were now advancing again threateningly, and from their angry cries and angrier gestures, it was evident they suspected the horseman to be a confederate of the fugitive. The original crowd also appeared to be fast coming to the same conclusion. Things began to look critical.

"Down with them both!" shouted the ringleader, springing forward and aiming a terrible blow at the horseman. "I warrant they're spies."

"Stop a minute," answered the latter, warding

the assault with a dexterity which showed he was a perfect master of the art of self-defence; and, drawing himself proudly up to his full height, he added, in a clear, ringing voice, that rose, like a battle-trumpet, over all the tumult, "is there no one here who knows me to be a good man and true?"

Scarcely had he ceased, when the brawny smith, of whom we have spoken before, elbowed his way through the crowd, and interposed between the horseman and his assailants.

"Ay, that do I, Master Murray!" he cried, and, as he spoke, he bared his bronzed, Herculean arm, and faced the ringleader. "And as for you, Jim Barret, you ought to know better."

"Don't mind a word he says," interposed one of the assailants. "I know the young game-cock: he's young Murray of Murray House; his father's as arrant a tory as lives; and so is he."

"You're a liar, Jack Floyd!" retorted the smith, turning on the speaker; "and you know it. Take that." As he spoke, his knotted arm shot straight out from the shoulder, and the man went down like a stunned ox. "And now, sirs," continued the smith, looking around as if ready for all comers, "you know I'm a man of my word, and I say that I'll answer for Mr. Murray. Why, hasn't he been coming in, all winter, twice a week, rain and shine, to drill a company? You know it to be true, Hal Smith, for you're one of the party; and you, Sam Jones; and you, Bill Wilson."

The persons, thus singled out from the spectators, answered in the affirmative, and, seeing the peril of their captain, pushed their way to the front and rallied around the smith.

"But if Master Murray is a true man," growled the ringleader, eying him sullenly, as a bull-dog regards the victim from whom he has been torn, "the other isn't. Let him give the villain up. No patriot would defend a spy!"

"There's sense in that," said the smith. "Here, come out, you varmint," and he seized Mountfort by the collar, "and don't stand shak-ing like a rat in a trap."

But Murray interposed. "This gentleman is mine," he said, putting back the smith gently. "He has fled to me for protection, and I will defend him with my life, if necessary. He is almost a stranger to me. But I have met him at the house of Mr. Dickinson, whom you all know of, and who, I suppose, can answer for him, that, at least, he is no spy."

"But he's a Britisher," angrily retorted the

ringleader, shaking his fist threateningly in Mountfort's face; "we heard him say so himself; didn't we, fellow-citizens? He swore he wished he'd been at Lexington to kill some of the patriots there. Bring him out, I say; bring him out."

This address had nearly changed the temper of the mob again. A rush was made on Murray and his defenders, who, for a moment, were borne back by the impetus. Cries of "Bring him out, bring him out!" were heard on every side.

But again the voice of Murray rose above the uproar.

"For God's sake," he cried, leaping on a step, where he could be seen by all, while the smith, with a dozen determined followers, formed a dense phalanx around Mountfort, "don't let us disgrace ourselves on a day like this, which has made us a nation——"

"So it has. Hurrah!" cried the smith, at the electric thought; and cheers rose, instantaneously, from the crowd, in response.

"Which has made us a nation," repeated Murray, seeing the advantage he had gained, his eye kindling and his form dilating, as he surveyed the crowd. "We boast that we arm to resist a lawless tyranny. Let us, therefore, respect law ourselves. This gentleman has a right to his opinion. It is a poor one, as we all know." Here there was a general laugh, and Murray saw that his point was secured. "But till he reduces that opinion to deeds, we have no right to interfere with him. When he does, if ever he does, I'll be the first man to meet him as an enemy. Meantime, here's a trifle to drink success to the good cause." He finished by throwing a guinea on the ground.

"By the Lord! he speaks like a lawyer," cried the smith. "That couldn't be beat, boys, could it, by Dickinson himself?"

Such also appeared to be the opinion of the majority of the crowd; for when Murray, on ceasing, stepped down, and, drawing the arm of Mountfort within his own, proceeded to leave the spot, followed by the smith and his little band of recruits, the throng gradually made way before him. Even the ringleader offered no further hostile demonstration. The guinea had fallen directly at his feet, so that he could not but pick it up; and having picked it up, he eyed it wistfully, for a moment, and irresolutely; but the temptation was too great; and muttering a few inarticulate words, which sounded like harmless threats of future vengeance, he gave a look of intelligence to his followers, and moved off toward a tavern, which

stood in sight, followed by a score, or more, of the worst members of the mob.

When Murray had finally extricated himself from the concourse, which he did after they had walked for about a block, he let the arm of his companion drop, as if there was contagion in the touch.

"This is Sixth and Chesnut," he said, coldly. "We part here."

Mountfort hesitated a moment. He did not like to thank a colonist for his life, but there was no alternative.

"You saved me from being murdered," he stammered. "If ever the fortune of war should give me an opportunity, I shall take pleasure in requiting the obligation. As I am now a captain in his majesty's foot, we may meet in battle before long."

"I hope we may," answered Murray, giving him his hand on it, "and I'll keep my word. You owe me no gratitude, and when we meet, I shall give no courtesies, and will accept none."

"As you please," said Mountfort. "But I shall get away from here, at once. When a low rabble won't let a gentleman and an officer say that his sacred majesty, God bless him! is right in this quarrel, it's time to go."

"I should think it was," replied Murray, sternly. "Nor is it safe to say that before others than what you call the rabble." And he put his hand meaningly to his side, where the sword was usually carried.

"I beg pardon," said Mountfort, coloring, "I meant nothing personal."

"One word, then," answered Murray. "You and yours, for years, have been insulting this people, calling them cowards, base-born peasants, and everything else that you considered opprobrious. At last, you finished your iniquity by firing on a few of them, who were almost unarmed. Now prepare for their vengeance! And as for their anger at you, remember that if I, or any other person, had been half so insolent to one of your London mobs, not all your gentlemen combined could have saved me from their brutality. Good day, sir—till we meet again."

Pronouncing these last words significantly, he turned on his heel, leaving the British officer too astonished to answer in season.

II. THE MURRAYS OF MURRAY HOUSE.

The Murrays of Murray House had lived, from father to son, for nearly three generations, in the vicinity of Philadelphia. Their mansion was a large, double house, built of dressed stone, with elaborate pediments to the

doors and windows, and surmounted by an ornamental balustrade above the eaves. It was altogether one of the finest structures of that day in the colonies, and is even yet a stately dwelling, vastly more imposing than the suburban residences of gingerbread Gothic, which at present surround it.

The owner of Murray House, at the time of which we write, was a widower in his sixtieth year. Major Murray, for he had served in the old French war, was emphatically a gentleman of the ancient school. Dignified and formal, yet the soul of courtesy, he belonged to a type, which, in its perfection, has long since passed away. He was proud of his birth; for the Murrays, as every genealogist knows, were once kings of the Isle of Man. He believed, in his secret heart, that few families were as good as his own. In his political opinions he verged to the extreme of what was then called toryism. That the few were born to rule, and the many to serve, was an axiom which he considered indisputable. There was but one article of his creed beside, indeed, which he held with equal tenacity, and that was that the Murrays were foremost among those possessed of this divine right of ruling.

The only other member of his household, with the exception of his son, was an unmarried sister. Gloriana Murray was now an old maid of fifty. We cannot better describe her than by saying she was a feminine type of her brother. The same pride of race, the same contempt for everybody not belonging to the gentry, which marked Major Murray, distinguished her also; only, in her case, these sentiments were softened by the native kindness and sweet charity, which always accompany a true woman.

The remaining member of the family was the son, to whom the reader has been already introduced. We prefer leaving him to speak and act for himself.

Miss Murray, attired with scrupulous care, as became a descendant of kings, was sitting in the wainscoted and carved north parlor, on the day on which our story opens, when her nephew entered, booted and spurred, and heated as if from a rapid ride.

The proprieties of life were so strictly observed, in this aristocratic mansion, that the advent of the young man in this attire betokened something unusual. Accordingly, the lady looked up, with some surprise.

"What has happened, my dear Hector?" she said.

Hector, who had just galloped out from the

city, and who had sought his aunt immediately, told the news.

"Dear me, dear me!" cried his aunt, wringing her hands, "and so the rebels have really dared to fire on his sacred majesty's troops. How shocking!"

"Shocking, my dear aunt? I think it is glorious. Who'll say now Americans are cowards?"

"Don't let my brother hear you talk so," replied his aunt, dropping her voice to a whisper, and looking cautiously around as if she feared the very walls would betray her nephew. "I have long seen your unaccountable leaning toward rebellion, Hector——"

"It is not rebellion," said Hector. "It is resistance in a holy cause."

Miss Gloriana, who could not have been more shocked, if she had been told that Cromwell was a patriot, and Charles the First not a martyr, lifted up her hands and remained silent.

"Well, we will not argue the matter," said her nephew. "But my mind is made up. I shall offer my sword to the cause of liberty."

"Oh! my dear boy," cried his aunt, "do not go and break all our hearts. When your poor mother died, and I held you, a puny baby, on my knee, I little thought you would live to disgrace us all. No! you shall not speak, you shall hear your poor, old aunt out. I pictured to myself that you would grow up handsome, brave, and tender; and so you have; and till this wicked, wicked rebellion came about, no one could have been better than you have been. I was so proud of you. I hoped, some day, you would fight for your king, and show that the Murrys were as brave as ever. But now it is all over. You will be the first of your race that ever deserted the crown. Oh! my dear, dear boy, don't——"

She could say no more, but, at these words, broke down in a flood of tears.

If anything could have moved Hector from his purpose, it would have been the distress of his aunt. He endeavored to soothe her with fond little caresses, smoothing down her hair and kissing her forehead.

"Listen to me calmly, aunt," he said. "You yourself have always told me to do right whatever may come."

"But, but," sobbed the poor creature, "this is not right."

"But I think it right. And every one's conscience, dear aunt, must be his, or her guide. Never did a people fight in juster quarrel than the Americans. They only ask to be represented, or else not taxed: in other words, to

have a voice in governing themselves. If, then, they are outvoted, they will submit. Representation, we are told, is the birthright of every Englishman; and surely, in coming to America, we did not surrender that right."

"But these people, most of them, are common work-people, peasants, mechanics, servants, who do not know, half as well as the king does, what is good for them."

A smile rose to Hector's lips, in spite of the solemnity of the occasion.

"My dear aunt," he said, "you forget we are living in the eighteenth century, and not in the fourteenth. The day for the few to govern, by pretended divine right, is gone; and whatever else may happen, it will never return."

"Oh! my poor, misguided Hector, this is sheer infidelity. What says the Bible? 'Honor the king.' Atheism and rebellion are one."

"The Bible, as I read it, aunt, is fervid, from first to last, with the great truth of the brotherhood of man. It teaches continually that all are created equal. It is a slander on Christianity to represent it as saying that some men are born booted and spurred to ride others. What is the foundation-stone of the Gospel, but doing unto others as you would be done unto?"

His aunt made no reply. She was not competent, she knew, to argue with her nephew. She could not show how he was wrong; but that he was wrong she never doubted. Suddenly she thought of another method of attack.

"Have you considered Helen?" she said. "She will never be yours, if you join the rebels."

A sudden spasm passed over the young man's face. His aunt saw it, and thought she had reached a vulnerable point.

"I know your secret," she said, "as you see. Helen is a dear, good girl, and worthy of you, Hector, as far as any one can be. Her ancestors fought by the sides of yours as far back as the Crusades. But she will never, never marry a rebel. And her father would disown her, if she did."

Hector answered, after awhile, in a constrained voice, which he vainly thought emotionless.

"I have never breathed a word of love to Helen. I should think it wrong to do so, without first having sought her father. That is, I mean, even if I loved her."

"Oh! my dear boy, you need not try to deceive me. I have seen you and Helen too often together not to read your mutual secret."

What was it made the blood rush to Hector's cheek? Why did his heart give a sudden bound

of joy? Because, like all young and sincere lovers, he was a humble one, and though he hoped, now and then, that Helen was not indifferent to him, he had never yet dared to believe so entirely. It was these words of his aunt which gave him the first, assured consciousness of the fact; for he well knew that the good lady, however weak she was in her logic, was a keen observer in all things, but especially in affairs of the heart.

"And—you think—Helen is not—indifferent to me?" he stammered, forgetting that, but a minute before, he had implied that he was quite careless whether she liked him, or not.

"Then you will not join the rebels?" exclaimed his aunt, joyfully, making a wide leap to her conclusion. For she reasoned to herself, "Poor boy! he has thought she did not love him, and, in his despair, has resolved to be a soldier." So she added aloud, and wiping the tears from her eyes, "I ought not to betray the secrets of my sex. But if ever you get Judge Erskine's consent, I will assure you of Helen's."

The face of Hector was crimson as he said, "Has Helen ever told you so?"

His aunt pushed him from her, with playful suddenness.

"How little you men know of us women!" she said. "Helen would die before she would tell any one, one of your family especially, that she was in love with you."

Hector's face, at once, lost all its joyousness. In his ignorance of the sex, he had, for the moment, pictured to himself the blushing girl coming to his aunt, and, while hiding her face on the good lady's shoulder, confessing how she loved the nephew. He felt now what a fool he had been.

"Well, but aunt," at last he managed to say, "how do you know it? Are you sure?"

"I have a great mind not to satisfy you. You do not deserve I should. How do I know it? When a girl starts at hearing an approaching step; when she blushes if a certain somebody enters; when she wears ribbons of the color that some somebody has admired; when she is uncertain in her manner, now all smiles, and then full of pretty petulance: when all these things happen; then, I say, the poor girl is in love, or would be, if her father was willing, and the gentleman had the courage to ask."

Hector's heart was in his throat as he said,

"And do you mean to say that Helen, God bless her! acts in this way when——"

His aunt put her hand playfully upon his mouth.

"I will say nothing," she replied. "You men

are all alike concealed. I have said too much, if you persist in this mad scheme," she added, solemnly, laying her hand on his arm, and looking imploringly into his eyes. "But give it up, my dear boy, give it up. Judge Erskine, you know, from his office, if from no other cause, would never consent that Helen should marry a rebel. Suppose you are opposed to the king's policy. There are thousands equally so, who yet do not consider it their duty to take up arms against him. You are the last scion of our branch of the Murrays. Do not send your father's gray hairs in sorrow to the grave, do not break all our hearts, Helen's among them."

Hector would have answered, but, at that moment, a bell sounded, and, as it ceased, steps were heard in the hall.

"Go," cried his aunt, terror and alarm on her countenance, and she pushed him through a door into the back parlor, "that is the dressing bell and those are your father's steps. I would not have you to meet brother now for the world. Don't anger him at dinner. Avoid talking of this dreadful affair at Lexington till the excitement is over. Go over to Judge Erskine's, to-night, and tell him you love Helen. And God in heaven bless you, my dear, dear boy!"

She had followed him into the room, as she spoke, closing the door behind her, and now, hearing her brother's step in the apartment she had left, she thrust Hector into the hall, and hurried back to meet his father.

III. FATHER AND SON.

A TUMULT of emotions agitated Hector at parting with his aunt. Up to the last few minutes he had not hesitated as to what he should do. His enthusiastic nature, long interested in what he felt was the holiest of causes, had been fired by the news from Lexington; and he had ridden home, part of the way on a gallop, fully resolved to announce his intention of joining the patriots, braving even his father's anger if necessary. But in all this he had quite forgotten Helen. It was not till his aunt had alluded to the subject, that he began to consider how it would affect his relations with her.

For the first time in his life he stood face to face with a great temptation. Even that morning, the temptation would have been less, for he was then comparatively in doubt as to the state of Helen's affections. The words of his aunt, however, had assured him upon that point. It is impossible to describe the rapturous happiness which followed this conviction.

At first he thought of nothing but this newly discovered bliss. In his heart he called Helen by a thousand endearing appellations. Oh! if he could do some great deed worthy of her. It was a first love, and those who have experienced a first love, know how, for the time, it lifts us above earth, filling the soul with divine raptures.

But soon he began to think of his aunt's prediction, that, if he joined the patriots, Helen would cast him off. He had too much faith, however, in her nobleness to believe this. Yet he could not conceal from himself that her father would never give his consent to her marrying a patriot. Must he then abandon her just as he had discovered she might be won? If he had already asked for a commission in the army, his honor, indeed, would have compelled him to go on; and then Helen would have been lost to him forever. But he had, as yet, made no public declaration of his intentions. It is true, he had been, for months, drilling a company, in secret; but this did not necessarily commit him.

Then he thought of his father. What his aunt had said was true: his joining the patriots would almost break that father's heart. In the near prospect of a breach with his only remaining parent, his duty to his country, and to those eternal principles of right which he believed to be involved in the approaching struggle, did not seem to him as imperative as it had seemed before.

The dinner-table at Murray House was an index of the social refinement of the inhabitants. There was no ostentation about it, yet everything was elegant, even luxurious. The damask cloth was of the heaviest pattern and white as driven snow. Cut glass and silver sparkled everywhere. Two colored men attended as waiters, one a white-haired butler, who remembered when Hector was born. The noiseless manner in which they moved about, the assiduity with which they changed the plates, and the apparently intuitive knowledge with which the butler filled his master's glass with the particular wine needed, were proofs, not only of perfect and long continued discipline, but also of the thorough social culture of the inhabitants of Murray House.

At first sight father and son would have been thought strikingly alike. But a second glance revealed radical differences in their appearance. Both had that large, massive jaw, which is invariably allied with firmness. Both had fine eyes. But the brows of the son had a broader sweep than those of the father, recalling the

majestic curve seen in antique statues of the gods. The forehead of the father was narrow, that of the son square and compact. Both had the dilated nostril, which, in man as in the race-horse, is said to be the mark of high courage. Behind the elaborate courtesy, which was the distinguishing sign of Major Murray's manner, lurked, it was evident, an inflexible decision and an iron will. It was evident that the son was of a character equally determined. But the grand breadth of the latter's head was an assurance that his opinions would be less apt than his father's to be narrow and prejudiced.

"What is this news your aunt tells me?" said Major Murray, as he brushed a particle of snuff carefully from his ruffles and prepared to spread his napkin before him. "She says you have been in town, to-day, and that there is word of a battle."

Hector understood, from this, that his aunt, in her anxiety to ward off a collision between him and his father, had been preparing the latter, by rehearsing the intelligence of the day. Thanking her in his heart, he said, addressing his parent,

"There was a conflict, sir: it can scarcely be called a battle."

"Let me hear all you know," said his father, taking the plate of soup, which the old servant presented with his best bow. "Perhaps your aunt overlooked something."

Hector, accordingly, gave a narrative of the facts which, as we have seen, had come to his knowledge. They were, in the main, accurate. Even in our day, the first report of a battle is not invariably correct, in all its details; and at the period of which we write, the exaggeration was often greater.

Major Murray listened with comparative composure. His florid face flushed, indeed, to a deeper red, making the contrast between it and his powdered hair even more striking. He ate his soup with greater rapidity than usual. He refused the tender of an additional bit of bread with an irritable shake of the head, instead of with his ordinary bland, "No, thank you, John." But these things, though proofs to his sister's observant eye that her brother was greatly agitated, in spite of his efforts to appear the contrary, would have passed unnoticed, probably, by a stranger. Nor was Hector deceived. He saw the signs of the coming storm. Hardly had he finished, when the tempest broke.

"And is that all?" said Major Murray, pushing his plate away. "It seems to me, sir, that you tell the tale with a wonderful composure."

"Have you no loyalty, that will fire up, when your king is thus basely assailed?"

"I have endeavored to tell the facts exactly as I heard them," was the evasive reply of Hector, who had caught a pleading look from his aunt. "It does not become me to give an opinion."

"Well, well," replied the father, who also had caught a glance from his sister, and who understood her to beg him not to discuss the matter before the servants. "We will hear more, tomorrow, of the affair. But never was a right royal king more foully and traitorously done by. John," he added, impatiently, turning to the butler, "where is your sherry? You are a long time, it seems to me, about it."

"Here, sir, here," cried the negro, terrified at this unusual irritability, hastening to fill his master's glass.

The major, instead of sipping at his wine, as was his practice, tossed off the glass at a bumper, which caused the butler, on the first occasion, to tell them in the kitchen, "Better look sharp, mind I tell yer; for mas'r in a drefful way 'bout dis fight at Lexington."

The dinner passed in comparative silence after this. The servants moved about more noiselessly than ever. Miss Murray regarded her brother and nephew uneasily, and was glad when the dessert was put upon the table. Preparatory to this, the major, breaking a long and moody silence, had said to the butler,

"Bring me a bottle of the Madeira of '45; the same we drank when we heard of the Pretender's defeat."

This, the choicest wine in the cellar, having been put upon the table, Miss Murray, as was her custom at this stage of the entertainment, rose to go. But her brother waived her back to her chair.

"One moment, if you please, sister," he said. "Before you leave, I wish you to join Hector and me in a toast."

The poor creature took her seat, but looked imploringly at her nephew; for she foreboded what was coming.

"This is a wine which I keep sacred, as you both know," resumed the major, turning his eyes meaningly on his son. "I reserve it for the birth-day of his majesty, and for other rare occasions. In no wine less delicate and choice can I drink, what I now propose, confusion to the rebels."

Miss Murray filled her glass, but with a trembling hand. Hector, carefully averting his eyes from her, set the bottle down by his side.

"You do not fill your glass," said the father, in a cold, stern voice, but without any apparent surprise.

"Excuse me, sir, if you please."

For a moment, father and son regarded each other in silence. At last Hector respectfully lowered his eyes. But the father saw the action was not fear: it was only deference.

Major Murray drew a long breath.

"Do you mean," he said, leaning slightly forward, and speaking with terrible slowness and distinctness, so that his sister felt every word as a dagger pricking her most sensitive nerves, "do you mean that you refuse the toast?"

The young man, thus appealed to, had no resource. He raised his eyes bravely and confronted his father again. He now began to realize, for the first time, the gulf which his patriotism would open between them. He had always expected that his joining the colonists would lead to a difference with his parent; but he had flattered himself that his father's sense of justice would finally plead for him. Now, however, as by a flash of lightning, he saw that the breach would be irreparable. It needed no words to predict this. It was written in every lineament of that flushed, yet rigid countenance, even in the very immobility with which the wine-glass was clenched. The young man's face was deadly pale. But he answered firmly,

"Father, I cannot drink the toast, for I think the people right."

"The people right!" almost shrieked the major, starting from his chair, which he pushed violently back. And then he stopped, as if choked for utterance.

"Oh! brother, brother," cried Miss Murray, flying to his side, and throwing her arms around him, for she feared he was about to strike his son. "Oh! brother," she said, imploringly.

The major looked down upon her. He seemed like one awakening from a dream. Gently unwinding her arms from about him, he led her, courteously, to the door.

"Excuse my violence," he said, with the heightened breeding of his day, "I forgot there was a lady in the room."

"But, brother," said his sister, lingering at the door, "may not Hector come too?"

A frown darkened the father's brow.

"Sister," he said, "understand, for the first and last time, that there is to be no interference between me and my son. I have long had a suspicion of this, and Hector and I must now come to an understanding. Your presence could do no good."

His look and tone were even more inexorable

than his words. Miss Murray reluctantly left the room, casting a last, imploring glance on Hector. With an elaborate bow her brother closed the door behind her.

Hector had risen when his aunt rose. He remained standing even after his father had resumed his chair, thinking this, under the circumstances, the most respectful attitude. Major Murray noticed it impatiently.

"Sit down, sir," he said, sternly.

The son still hesitated.

"Sit down, I say," repeated the father, his voice quivering with passion: and Hector, thinking it most dutiful to obey, resumed his place at the table.

"There is your glass," said his parent. "Fill it, at once, or," and he swore a terrible oath, "you go from these doors to-night, and never enter them again."

Rarely had Hector heard his father swear. Not even his military life had taught Major Murray to indulge in what was then too common a vice even with well-bred gentlemen. This oath, if anything else had been wanting, would have convinced Hector of the profound depths to which his parent was moved.

"Father," said the young man, in a deprecating voice, but never, for an instant, blanching from his high resolve, even in thought, "ask me to do anything but this. In every duty, but my duty to God, I will obey you."

The veins on the sire's temples swelled almost to bursting. He started back as if he heard the hiss of an adder, and the thin stem of the wine-glass he held shivered to pieces in his grasp.

"What," he cried, "blaspheming to my face! Do you dare call rebellion religion? Out of my sight, traitor. False to your race, your king, your God——" He stopped, choked for words.

It is difficult, perhaps, in these times, to realize the pitch of horror, to which this refusal of his son, and the consequent revelation of that

son's long suspected disloyalty, had worked up Major Murray. We must transport ourselves back into that age, when the doctrine of the divine right of kings was not yet entirely exploded; we must recall the father's antecedents; we must remember how, in all revolutionary eras, human passions acquire a volcanic heat; we must do all this, and, in addition, bear in mind the inflexible will of the father, now for the first time openly thwarted by his son, and thwarted in so dear a point, before we can understand his emotion.

The son's cheek flushed as redly as his parent's: then paled to a livid white. But his eye did not quail, nor did a muscle of his mouth quiver. He regarded his father, more in pity than in anger, for a moment, and then quietly rose to go.

He had nearly reached the door, when a last thought seemed to strike him, and, coming back, he put his hand on the table, regarded his father for a moment, and then said,

"Father, it is useless for us, I suppose, to talk on this question. You think your loyalty lies in one direction. I see my duty clearly in another. But why should we not part in peace? If you say so, I will never claim to be your son, I will never ask even to see you," and here, for an instant, his voice almost broke down.

"Have you done?" said his parent.

The words were cold and cruel as the steel that is plunged into your heart.

The son bowed and turned away. He felt he might as well attempt to move the Sphinx as that hard, inflexible face before him.

It was in this way that Hector went forth from his father's house.

"Sister, I have no son," said the major, that night, "let us never talk of him again."

And no more was said upon the subject at Murray House.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE MURRAYS OF MURRAY HOUSE.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON, AUTHOR OF "KATE AYLESFORD," "THE OLD STONE MANSION," ETC.

[Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1862, by Charles J. Peterson, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, in and for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.]

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 41.

IV. HELEN ERSKINE.

We wish we could describe Helen Erskine.

It is not enough to say that she was beautiful. That she had dark blue eyes, golden hair, rosy cheeks, and a form of exquisite symmetry and grace. For she might have had all these, and not been Helen. She reminded you of all things happy and bright. Her presence influenced you like sunshine, or fresh breezes, or the songs of birds at daybreak, or the fragrance of wild flowers in woods. Everything about her was natural and true. But, perhaps, the best way is to let her describe herself. We shall, therefore, lay before our readers extracts from a diary, kept by her, and which has come down to us with other family papers, from the period of which we write.

Our first extract goes back to nearly a year before our story opens.

June 8th, 1774.—Ugh! what a rain. Patter, patter, patter, soak, soak, soak. A drizzling sort of rain, that says, "Make yourself as comfortable as you can, for there will be no let up;" and as I look from my window across the country, I see the gray watery haze enveloping the whole landscape, I feel that I might as well accept the inevitable, for there is no going out for me to-day. Now if I only had that volume of "Clarissa Harlowe" here, wouldn't I cuddle up in the window seat and enjoy it! To think that it's half a mile across wet fields, to Murray House. I wonder, by-the-by, when the Murrays are coming back from Europe: when they do, I shall have to give up going to their library. Father says they are to bring back that son, of whom their housekeeper is always talking. Poor Mrs. Martin! she thinks there is nobody as good as a Murray. If I only dare ask Martha to go and get Mrs. Martin to send the book to me; but I really think I am more afraid of Martha than I ever was of anybody in my life. Not that she'd mind the rain! Not a bit, for she's only an amphibious animal at the best, and enjoys paddling about in tucked-up petticoat and "galoshes," as she calls them, as much as a duck enjoys water; but then she's

"contrairy," and likes to make a fuss, and would come home and complain of the grass "dragging" her so; and of feeling "the rheumatiz a-flying about her like a Jack-o-Lantern;" and of her hard life, "a slaving and a-slaving so when her old bones ache so much," whilst Mrs. Martin sits frumped up at Murray House, for all the world as if she was the lady of the place. But oh! if I only had "Clarissa Harlowe!" Mamma would argue an hour with me, if I said a word about going for the book myself, and I should wish it still in manuscript in Richardson's desk before I got off. I know just how it would be: she'd say, "My dear, there are plenty of books in your dear father's study, why don't you read some of them?—they'd do you a great deal more good than these silly novels." And then I'd say, "But, mamma, I don't want to read 'Montesquieu's Spirit of Laws,' I've read it till it's taken all the spirit out of me; and as for entertaining books, the most entertaining papa has is Burton's 'Anatomy of Melancholy.' All the rest are old musty law books, except that dreadful 'Rapun's England,' in its huge folios, which is stupider still." And then she'd say, "Well, I'm sorry, Helen, to see that you can't live without excitement." And then, perhaps, (I don't know,) my respect for my dear mother would prevent my saying anything more; but I should feel that I'm young, and have impatient blood in my veins; and should inwardly fret for excitement of some kind, if it was only to be out-of-doors with the fine rain drizzling on my face, and the damp air cooling my spirits. Yes! I know how it would be. Dear mamma! she is quite content to sit by the fire-side in winter, and in the piazza in summer, and knit and knit, till the click, click of her needles almost drives me crazy sometimes. I really believe there isn't a baby about, from Mr. Logan's son and heir, in fine cambric and embroidery, down to the thirteenth child of poor Mrs. Brown, in its bright yellow flannel and homespun, that hasn't poked its tiny toes through socks of mamma's knitting, or hasn't been covered up,

ears and nose, in one of her baby blankets, or been aired in one of her warm, little hoods. A new baby is a godsend to mamma. But, dear me! if I could only coax her to let me run across to Murray House for that book. There, I knew how it would be. There goes Martha pattering down the yard, over the wet grass, square and formidable, pouncing like a great hawk on the poor, half-drowned young turkeys that she wants to shelter, and getting finely pecked by the old hen whose little chicks she's taking from her. What a hard, grim way she has of doing everything! She seems to have no mercy in her kindness. Now I suppose that old hen will look upon her as her enemy for life, when she's only saving the lives of the tiny, fuzzy, yellow-balls, and will put them in a basket by the kitchen fire, and cover them up with a bit of old woolen shawl, and stuff them with moistened Indian meal; and then, as she marches about the kitchen, "on household thoughts intent," she will answer their piping "peep, peep, peep," in a tone as near like their own as she can make it. Heigho! What sport poor, dear Eleanor Murray and I used to have, at Murray House, on rainy days, rummaging in the attics, and dressing up in old-fashioned sacques, such as Lady Murray, her grandmother, had in Queen Anne's time! How we used to drag them out of their moth-eaten trunks, fix ourselves before the old mirror, turn around and around to see how we looked, and then walk into the parlor, where Eleanor's aunt sat in state! What charming stories she used to tell us of the times when she and her sister, when they were on that visit to their cousins in England, wore this or that dress, went to this or that ball, and had this or that beau! Dear Miss Gloriana! How she must have changed from the gay, flirting belle of her youth, to the quiet, dignified old maid! They say she and Lord Trevor were in love, but that the match was broken off, nobody has ever known why: but that's how she never married. She always used to sit in that one chair by the fire-place, summer and winter, and her greatest effort was to put her hand up to the bell-rope to ring for a servant. I think I never saw her without her gloves and her little work-bag. What a picture she was! Always so erect, never leaning against the antiquated, straight-backed chair, but sitting as she had been taught to do when she was at boarding-school in England, her gloved hands crossed on her work-bag that lay in her lap. I sometimes wondered what she thought of; whether of that nephew, away in London, she talked about so much; or

of Lord Trevor; or of her presentation at court, when the king was so struck with her. But she was always placid, and followed Eleanor, her pet, wherever she went. What merry times we used to have then, us two, still children, though we were sixteen! It's but two years ago, and yet it seems an age. And I shall never see Eleanor again. Well, I can't think of that; of those long days of sickness, when we two, with mamma, watched by her bedside; and of that midnight; and of the day, just like this, when we laid her down with the dripping rain on her coffin. No wonder Major Murray couldn't bear to stay, after that, in the old house. But he can't be happy either, away from it; and I'm glad he's coming back. I used to be a pet of his. What stories he would tell of the old French war, of the bivouac in the forest, and of the whoop of the Indians that often startled them from their beds in the night! Two years! I shall get the blues if I stay up here any longer, so I'll run down to mamma, and we'll try to decide whether the socks for the next baby shall be blue or pink.

June 11th.—Such a provoking thing! I wish "Clarissa Harlowe" was at the bottom of the Schuylkill. How was I to know, forsooth! that Hector Murray, Esq., was to come, like a ghost, on some stormy night to Murray House. I had seated myself so comfortably in the deep window ledge of the library, this morning, intending to read; but the sweet summer sun came glinting down so brightly through the green leaves of the huge old elms, by the window, making a fret-work of gold on the grass and in the room; and the bright periwinkles turned their dewy blue eyes up to me, from their green bed below; and the oriole sung and swung in his nest from the tree; and the little, brown house-sparrow, that had his home in the rose-bush, hopped about on the ground, perking his head around so saucily; why, how could I read? The morning was like a beautiful poem, and as I looked and looked, a feeling of unutterable content came over me. So I coiled myself up in the window-sill, which is a capital seat, for the walls at Murray House are three feet thick, and resting my head on my knees, which I had clasped with my arms, I forgot all about the book, which I had been so anxious to have for the last three days. Presently, the library door opened, and, supposing it to be good Mrs. Martin, I did not move. The door was closed in a moment again, and I felt no curiosity or concern, till I heard my own name mentioned, and a man's voice ask, "Helen Erskine! and who's Helen Erskine? Oh! I remember, lawyer

Erskine's daughter, that Eleanor used to write about, and I've heard my aunt describe as such a wild slip of a thing." Mrs. Martin's reply was so low that I only heard the words, "read" and "library," and "her father is Judge Erskine now." Then again came the man's tones. "Oh! no, let her have as many books as she wants. Only, if you can, suggest to her to take them home with her to read. I hate the very sight of ribbons." And directly I saw my Lord Paramount striding down the avenue, with great black Carlo at his heels. So this was Hector Murray, the "my son, Hector," of pompous Major Murray, and "the brother Hector" of dear Eleanor. I don't like him. What business had he to suppose that I should continue to frequent the library, after I knew he had returned? No hint would have been needed from Mrs. Martin; and I'll not take his books either. I'm "a wild slip of a thing," am I? I wonder what fascination he thinks there is about himself to make it necessary to "suggest" to me to read at home. And then, too, I can't bear a man who isn't kind to animals. Poor Carlo, who evidently remembered him, though it's been years and years since they met, went jumping and bouncing around him, now pulling his coat skirt, then springing in front of him, all the time eager for some little notice, which his high and mighty master never gave. He isn't a bit like dear Eleanor. They talk of the Murrys as a handsome race, but, for my part, I think Eleanor, who favored her mother's family, was the best looking. I'd rather be descended, too, from the old Norsemen, which her mother was, than from the Dutch Murrys, though they did become kings of the Isle of Man. Yes, it was nobler to be a martyr in the grand old days of Queen Elizabeth, as Eleanor's maternal ancestor was, than to lord it, by brutal force, over poor, degraded serfs, as the Murrys and Erskines did, in those dreadful dark ages. What a fine old face Eleanor's great grandfather had! And how he used to kindle up, when he talked of those heroic times, when his ancestor laid down his life at the stake! His grandson doesn't look a bit like him. I waited till the conceited fellow was out of sight, and then hunted up Mrs. Martin. I told her I regretted that my being there, that morning, had made young Mr. Murray uneasy, as I should certainly not frequent the library now that he had returned; that I had replaced the book I had been reading; and before the good soul could collect her faculties, which I had scattered by my hot temper, I was off. I'm too sorry, now, that I took any notice of the affair at all: it was both

chillish and undignified. Mamma did not seem to think the thing a matter of any importance; but it wasn't to her it was "suggested" to read at home. "A wild slip of a thing" indeed! Mamma says she could have told me that the Murrys had come back, if she had thought of it. Father heard of it, yesterday, in town. They are staying there till they get rested, and till their things are unloaded from the ship; for it seems they have brought home a quantity of beautiful furniture and some fine pictures. Father is to call upon them to-day. "You'll see a great deal of them, my child," said mamma, "for they're our nearest neighbors of the gentry; and you know you're a pet with both Major Murray and his sister." But if I see much of them, they'll have to come here. I should like, indeed, to kiss the dear, good old major, for he's a darling soul, though he is so pompous. And as for Miss Gloriana, what a treat a morning's chat, with her, would be! How she could tell all about the newest fashions, and what books are out in London, and who's the toast at court! But that Hector I detest, and I hope I'll never see him again.

V. HOW MASTER HECTOR GOT HIS PORTRAIT TAKEN.

WE give another scrap from the diary.

June 14th.—Well, I've had my revenge on Hector Murray, Esq. It was too good. I can't help laughing now when I think of it. Serves him right, though, for coming to Murray House at all, and keeping me out of the library, which both Eleanor and her aunt said I should always use. Besides, I can't see Miss Gloriana, dear, darling old maid! half as much as I wish. How glad she was to meet me again, when mamma and I drove in, yesterday, to call on her! But she needn't have apologized for her nephew being out. I have seen him once too often already. "A wild slip of a thing" indeed! But I've had my revenge to-day. I got up this morning, and said to myself, What am I to do with no books to read? I tied up the vines in the garden, and snipped off dead roses; I played over my small stock of music, but my poor piano jingles terribly after that splendid one at Murray House; and I walked till I had tired myself to death: so I had no resource left but sketching. Now I know that I draw miserably, in a sort of Chinese style: still it was some kind of amusement, and as it was a charming day, I took my portfolio and pencils, and went down to the Schuylkill. How beautiful it was, from the rock overlooking the river: the rapids above, the island down the stream,

and the calm, lustrous water sleeping in the quiet sunshine! So I "executed" water birds and hemlocks and jagged gray rocks and moss-covered stumps, and the Schuylkill forming a dusky pool under the shadow of the cliff where I stood; and, being dissatisfied with all, I gathered my materials and went around to see how the picturesque old mill would look on paper. It was such a glorious day! The afternoon sun looked askance over the round shoulder of the hill opposite, and then came slanting down the rift in the valley, throwing a golden light over one half of the water, while the other was dark with the wooded shadows. The brown, creeper-covered mill took a deeper color from the declining sun, and, as I was drinking in all this beauty, a little boat came gliding around a head-land. It was just the picture that I wanted. The uplifted oar of the rower, with the water falling from the blade in glittering diamond drops; the slouched hat and bright red shirt; a small boy lazily trailing his hand in the river; the golden sunlight and dark shadows; and above all, high overhead, a solitary hawk floating idly. The boat soon stopped, and I saw fishing tackle being prepared. It was exactly in the proper spot. I was breathless with fear lest it should move; so I called out to the man, "If you will stay just as you are, my good fellow, for a few minutes, I will give you a shilling." He looked around, as if he did not quite understand me; but on my repeating the request he answered politely enough, "Very well, Miss." I sketched more rapidly, and better, than I had ever done before; and in a few minutes I had finished, and called out, "Thank you, now I've done, and here is the shilling." I did not look up, but went on, adding a line here and a shade there, and did not notice my lay figure till he stood before me. In fact, I scarcely noticed him then, so occupied was I with my unusual success, till, on handing him the money, I caught such an amused expression in a pair of very handsome dark eyes, while the figure, that had looked ordinary enough when seated in the boat, gradually, to my astonished vision, changed to grace itself. Then the truth flashed upon me. I had paid Hector Murray, Esq., a shilling to be "taken." I was too amazed to do anything but gape, with my mouth and eyes wide open; and before I had recovered myself, he was in the boat again. Well, I am not sorry. What business had he to be going about, under false pretences, with a red shirt and slouched hat? I had seen the men from the mill in just such a costume a dozen times. Mamma is horrified, and says it

all comes from the terrible habit I have of speaking to everybody, just as the whim seizes me. He may call me now "a wild slip of a thing" as much as he likes. We're even, at any rate. I called him "my good fellow," and I wonder how his High Mightiness liked that.

June 15th.—He has been here. He came out, with his father and aunt, to call on us. The major and Miss Gloriana rode in their coach, and he attended them on horseback. They are to move out for good, next week, and then, the major said, they hoped to see much of us. He—the son, I mean—is not such a bad-looking youth after all: at least his horseman's dress quite became him. I think, too, he is quite as much like his grandfather as like the Murrays. He has the same winning smile that Eleanor had. Poor fellow! I pitied him, when he first came in. Papa had told us, the night before, that they were coming out: so I was prepared for them; and mamma says nobody can be more self-possessed than I can, when I wish to be so. I felt myself color a little, but that was all. As for him, he blushed like a peony, and was so embarrassed he could scarcely make his compliments. For a long time, whenever I addressed him, he blushed and stammered like a boy. I see he doesn't know that I overheard him at Murray House. He thinks only of the ridiculous figure he cut being "taken." I hope it will be a good lesson to him. The young men are so vain, now-a-days, that they want snubbing. He is not a fool, though, if he is awkward. No, I can't call him awkward either; he is only abashed. He talks well, even eloquently. Somehow, I don't believe he has so much of the silly Murray pride, as his father has. When he spoke of his grandfather, to-day, the tears almost came into his eyes. "I am glad you loved him," he said to me; "there are no such Nestors now, Miss Erskine; what judgment he had! what a heroic soul! ah! he was one who could have died for his country!"

June 30th.—I have been to Murray House. We all went over there to dinner yesterday. The Chews, Logans, and the rest of our set were there; and Sally Norris, that "wild slip of a thing," as young Mr. Murray called her: he seems to have a fancy for the phrase. I wondered who would take me in to dinner. I expected the heir of the house to lead out Miss Sally, as her family has had a Speaker of the Assembly; but lo! it was poor me that he offered for: I suppose because his aunt, or father, told him we were their oldest friends. I wonder if all young girls are such arrant flirts as that Miss Legree. Or is it because she's partly

French? I should like to know if they're all as forward as she is. It was, "Oh! Mr. Murray," till I got ashamed for her: I'm sure the young gentleman, even if he'd been less conceited, must have noticed it. Then to see how she handled her eyes! I'm not astonished that young Mr. Murray "hates the very sight of ribbons," if that's the way he's been made love to by the girls. He was very civil to me though. Not that he was rude to Miss Legree either; but, through all his politeness to her, I think I saw that he was annoyed. I believe he looks on me as reserved. He said as much, indeed, in a half-doubtful way. I did not talk much, it is true: I thought he might do that himself. He shan't have any grounds for regarding me, after this, as a "wild slip of a thing." I suppose I am, as mamma says, too free sometimes. But I hate hypocrisy, and I have high spirits: surely we can't always be prim! In the evening they asked me to sing. I tried to beg off, but Major Murray wouldn't hear of it; and his son, very politely, came and turned the leaves for me. The major was profuse of compliments; and so was his son, for that matter; but these young men seem to think they must flatter us girls, whether or no, poor things! Still, Hector, as they call him, has a way of saying a graceful thing, which is quite different from other young men. I suppose a London education does improve the manners. But for that matter, he has been in Paris too; and he quite raved about the dauphiness, who is said to be the most beautiful woman in Europe. I call her the dauphiness, but she is queen now. He tells me that, in some things, I resemble Maria Antoinette. "You both have the same air of high courage," said he. That seems to me to be a queer compliment: to tell a woman she is courageous. But I do believe I am. I was never afraid even of ghosts. I suppose I'm an Alrunen maiden, as young Mr. Murray called me, and that's why I like the old Vikings so much. I certainly shall like him better than I ever expected to, if he will look more as he did to-night, more like his grandfather, like a young Viking himself.

Here we abandon the diary. It is not fair to quote further from it. It has answered our purpose, we hope, of giving a truer idea of the fair Helen, than any description of ours could have done; and it has told in what way an acquaintance began, which soon ripened, on one side at least, into love. The piquancy of Helen's manner had a fascination for Hector which he could not resist. At times, he flattered himself she was not insensible to him; but again her

cold, haughty indifference sent him from her side in despair. Throughout the summer, the winter, and the spring, he had wooed her persistently; yet up to the time at which our story opens, without gaining any real foothold. Just as he thought he had secured her, she was off: it was the old chase of the butterfly over again. A dozen times he vowed never to go near her: she was heartless, she was a coquet, she only made sport of him. But, somehow, he never could keep these resolutions.

On one subject, however, they thought entirely alike. The difficulties between the colonies and mother country were rapidly approaching a crisis; and Hector was enthusiastically on the side of America. How could a generous heart, like Helen's, be other than patriotic also? She sympathized, from her very organization, with whatever was noble, heroic, or in favor of freedom. The knowledge that Major Murray and Judge Erskine leaned to the parliament, by preventing an exchange of sentiment with them, drew these young people closer together. Often, when Hector was with Helen, he forgot even his suit, in dilating on the wrongs of his country. At such times, her earnest attention, the rising color on her cheek, her heaving breast, and her kindling eye, would have flattered most men with the opinion that she loved them; but Hector had no vanity of this description, and he attributed her emotion, justly, to her patriotism. There was no quicker road, indeed, to Helen's heart, than to speak of whatever was noble and good.

Helen was his only confident in regard to his military pursuits. She had long known that he was drilling a company in anticipation of a war. But her nature was more sanguine than his: she could not believe that England would persist in oppression; and she had never supposed, therefore, that this scheme of Hector would be known at Murray House. The intelligence of the battle of Lexington, which her father brought out, on the very day that Hector was disinherited, first made her think of the peril he ran. She was too well aware of Major Murray's opinions, and had too much faith in the patriotism of his son, to doubt that there would be a quarrel. The very thought took away her breath. She knew, also, that her father would take Major Murray's side. He had seemed terribly excited at dinner, more so than she had ever seen him; and had once made an allusion, which she thought could only apply to Hector, and to some knowledge of his late military pursuits. She felt as if everything, suddenly, had become dark around her. War, always terrible, appeared to her now more

terrible than ever. And yet, how could it be averted? A strange depression seized her. She sought a secluded arbor, at the bottom of the garden, and, burying her face in her hands, gave way to tears.

Suddenly she heard a step close beside her, and, looking up, beheld Hector.

VI. THE INTERVIEW.

It is impossible to describe the feelings of Hector as he left his father's dining-room, they were so various, and even conflicting. But a burning sense of injustice soon obtained the mastery of all others. His pride and anger rose against the cruel decree which banished him.

For this reason he did not stop to bid even his aunt farewell, though, as he passed the north parlor, he heard her sobbing within. Nor did he seek the stable for his horse. "I will take nothing with me," he said, hotly. "I will carve out my own destiny."

He was soon in the high road. The evening sun was setting behind the wooded hills; the western sky was a blaze of golden glory; the Schuylkill glowed, in the reflection, like a river of Paradise. A few late apple-blossoms floated lazily down. All was quiet and serene.

The calm scene, combined with his rapid pace, sensibly soothed his thoughts. His anger died out and gave place to regret.

Suddenly he became conscious that he was approaching Erskine Place, and, for the first time since his altercation with his father, he remembered Helen.

And yet, in reality, it was her influence, unconsciously to himself, which had led his steps in that direction. There were two ways of reaching the city from Murray House, one of which passed by Erskine Place; and this one, from long habit, he had taken now, though the other was really the shorter. Just as he saw where he was, he beheld Helen pass down the garden walk, her eyes on the ground, evidently seeking the arbor where he and she had passed so many happy hours.

Had Hector stopped to reason, the last thing he should have done, under present circumstances, would have been to seek Helen. But twenty two is not an age where reason is always paramount. Whatever right he might have had, an hour ago, to press his suit, his being disinherited had totally altered his relations to her. For now he could offer her nothing but beggary; now he could bring her only his father's curse. He had told his aunt, that, until Judge Erskine had approved of his addresses, he

should consider it dishonorable to sue directly for Helen's love: and that approval had not yet been given, nay! it would now never be given.

But all this, which he ought to have considered, he did not think of now. He saw Helen before him, evidently in distress; and, in the impulse of the moment, he placed his hand on the garden palings, leapt lightly over, and followed her. Had he looked around first, he would have discovered that the judge, at that instant, was coming out on his front door-step, and had observed him; and that, with lowering brow and hasty strides, the incensed parent was starting to intercept him. The gardens, however, were extensive; the arbor was at the furthest point from the house; our hero was close to Helen; and so a few minutes were left to the young people before they were interrupted.

We have said that Helen had already reached the arbor, when, suddenly, she heard a step beside her, and, looking up, beheld Hector. Though he was, at that moment, uppermost in her thoughts, he was the last person she had expected to see. She gave a start and scream, and tried to avert her face, remembering her tears and why they had been shed.

"Helen," said Hector.

"I am going away, perhaps forever. You have heard that there has been a battle, haven't you?"

The hands fell from her face at these words, and she looked quickly up, her eyes shining with tears.

"Going away? To join the army?" she cried, breathlessly. "Oh! Hector, what will your father say?"

He had seized her hands, and now stood, holding both of them in his, and gazing earnestly down into her face. Her eyes fell before that ardent gaze, while the blushes rose to her very forehead. She made an effort to withdraw her hands; but Hector forcibly retained them.

"I have been disinherited," he said.

Helen gave a sudden start, which he misinterpreted; for, dropping her hands, he said, bitterly,

"Yes! I am a beggar now, to be shunned by everybody."

He folded his arms across his chest, as he spoke, and looked down on her reproachfully.

"Oh! Hector," cried Helen.

Even yet his proud, sensitive soul misinterpreted her.

"I have given up all for my country," he said, "I have even risked a father's curse, and there is no one now to care for me."

He turned on his heel, as he spoke, and was about to leave her.

But, at sight of his unaffected misery, Helen sprang up and caught him by the arm.

"Oh! no, no, we all care for you," she cried.

With what a look he turned on her!

"And do *you* care for me?" he said. "Oh! Helen, it is parting from you that is so dreadful. You know how I love you. Say that my love is returned and I will bear my lot cheerfully."

This passionate avowal came upon Helen so unexpectedly, that, even if other thoughts had not overmastered her for the time, she would have been unable to analyze the nature of her regard for Hector. In her virgin innocence she had regarded him in the light of a brother, often wishing that he stood in that relation to her; and the grief she felt now at his departure, and at his quarrel with his father, she would doubtless, if she had thought of it at all, have attributed entirely to this sisterly sentiment. But all she realized, now, in relation to the matter, was the conviction that his suit was one to which she would never be allowed to consent, and that, therefore, it would be cruelty to give him hope.

What she would have said we cannot tell, however, but at this moment a nervous hand, seizing Helen's arm, flung her away from the young man's side. Both the daughter and Hector recognized, at the same instant, Judge Erskine, who had approached unheard.

Usually, the judge was placid and courteous to a fault. His profession had taught him to control his features to an extent not common with other men. But the angry father now stood there, interposing between his daughter and the young man, with a frown on his brow, and his tall, thin figure seeming to dilate to twice its ordinary height. One hand held Helen behind him, the other was raised at Hector, the forefinger pointing threateningly.

"You call yourself a man of honor, Hector

"Murray," he said. "And yet you steal in here, like a thief, to persuade my daughter to disgrace her name! Not a word, sir," he cried, in a voice quivering with passion, as he saw that Hector was about to deprecate this accusation. "I saw it all. I have heard, to day, that you had long been plotting, in secret, against your king; and he who will betray his monarch, will not scruple to betray others. Begone, sir!"

He stamped his foot, as he spoke, and imperiously waived off Hector, who advanced to expostulate.

The young man hesitated, even yet, for an instant. His blood boiled at the taunts of the judge. To any one but Helen's father, or in any presence but that of a woman, his answer would have been a mortal defiance. Even as it was, and though conscious that he had acted imprudently, he could not think of bearing such language in silence. It was due to himself, at least, to defend himself, as far as he could, from the baser imputations of the judge. He longed, too, by the delay even of a minute, to catch another look from Helen, so as to be assured, that, in spite of her father's anger, she was not wholly indifferent to him. But the violence of the incensed parent forbade all explanation, forbade even this little delay. It became evident, that, if Hector remained even for a moment, the judge, in the extremity of his rage, would strike him. Helen, foreseeing this, wound her arms around her father, and darted an imploring look at Hector. It was not such a look as the lover had longed for: it was only a wild look of terror and entreaty; but he could not disobey it. Though it left him smarting with the brand of dishonor her father had fixed upon him, though it gave him no indication, not even the slightest, of the character of her own sentiments, he was forced to yield to it. He turned, and, leaping the fence, was on the high road, a moment after, on his way to the city.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE MURRAYS OF MURRAY HOUSE.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON, AUTHOR OF "KATE AYLESFORD," "THE OLD STONE MANSION," ETC.

[Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1862, by Charles J. Peterson, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, in and for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.]

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VII. THE IMPENDING BATTLE.

THE War of Independence, thus opened at Lexington, advanced with rapid strides. But it is not our purpose to relate the events of that struggle, except so far as they bore directly on the fortunes of our hero.

Hector had left Philadelphia on the morning after his interview with Helen, and repairing immediately to Cambridge, where the patriot army was rallying, had arrived in time to offer his services for the expedition against Canada, joining the division which was to march under the orders of Arnold. The way led across the highlands of Maine, through dense forests, where, for weeks, not a human habitation was seen. Words are inadequate to record the privations of that journey, or the heroism with which they were endured. Hector, ardent and daring, was among the foremost at the attack on Quebec, and, when that attack was repulsed, was one of those who were made prisoners. When many weary months had elapsed he was exchanged, in time to take part in the earlier movements against Burgoyne. But when Sir William Howe set out on his expedition against Philadelphia, Hector eagerly embraced an opportunity of being sent southward with despatches.

Various motives influenced him in welcoming this change. Foremost among them was his desire to join the army of Washington and assist in the defence of the capital. But this was not his sole inducement. The circumstances under which he had parted with Helen had left him only half-assured of the nature of her sentiments toward him. At times, as of old, he persuaded himself that she loved him. This was, when he recalled what his aunt had said, or dwell on Helen's agitation at their last interview. But these happy convictions were shaken, when he remembered her silence at the same interview, and her evident desire to get rid of him. Meantime months had passed, and in that interval, even if she had felt, at first parting, some regrets, there had been leisure and opportunity enough for her to forget him.

In Philadelphia there would occur many opportunities, when he might meet Helen, and learn, from her manner, even if not in words, what his hopes were.

Another circumstance made him desirous of joining the main army. He had, originally, sought employment at the North, because it removed him from the vicinity of Murray House; since any meeting, in public, between his father and himself, could not, under present circumstances, but be unpleasant. But Major Murray, as Hector had only lately heard, had sailed for Europe the preceding spring.

It was the month of September. The sun had nearly reached his meridian, and was pouring his rays down from a cloudless sky, when a horseman dashed up to the gate of a farmhouse, not far from the Brandywine, and asked if he could see the commander-in-chief. As he stood there waiting, while his request was announced, he glanced up, with some curiosity, to see the dwelling which sheltered the fortunes of the nation. The house was two stories in height, on one side, but, on the other, sloped backward almost to the ground, as was the prevalent fashion, among dwellings of its character, at that time and in that locality. A huge willow, which overshadowed one end; a bit of sweet-brier; a small grass plat; and a neat pale fence were the only ornamental objects about. But though taste had done so little to adorn the place, nature had done much by affording it the loveliest surroundings. The great state of Pennsylvania, indeed, is full of beautiful scenery. There is the Delaware Water-Gap, where the river breaks through mountains sixteen hundred feet high. There are the elm-fringed shores of the winding Juniata and Susquehanna, names which suggest the picturesque by their very sound. There are the wide-sweeping hills of Washington and Westmoreland counties, alternating between green pastures, golden grain-fields, and wooded acclivities. There is the tempestuous swell of the Alleghanies, as, standing on some central peak, you see the mountains rolling, billowy, away for

a hundred miles to east and west, and for a thousand miles southward. There are fair and smiling valleys, like that of Lebanon, stretching further than eye can see, with the Blue Mountains, like a vast wall on the north, and the South Mountain on the other boundary, with receding and advancing angles and great bastions, like a gigantic earthwork from primeval times and the wars of Titans. There, too, is the valley of the Schuylkill, as viewed from the heights below Reading, a scene, that, more than any other in the world, recalls that Paradise around the Arno. And there, differing from all these, as each differs from the other, are the calm, pastoral hills and intervalles of Chester county, with their stone farm-houses nestled by the clear and rocky streams, their quaint mills, their bursting barns, their pleasant orchards, and their delicious variety of meadow, ploughed fields, and stately old woods. It was in this last and lovely section of the state—where, to look at the landscape, one would think war could never come, and where no want of taste could make even the humblest house entirely ugly—that the head-quarters of Washington, which we have just described, stood.

"Here is the general," said the aid, who had carried in the message. "He is very much occupied; but as what you have to say is of importance, he will hear you."

The horseman, who wore the dress of an ordinary inhabitant of the region, looked quickly around, at these words, and beheld advancing toward him that majestic presence, with which, from having been so often described and pictured, every American is familiar. There was the tall and stately form; the dress of buff and blue; the commanding air; the face that once seen was never forgotten, and that bespoke a character alike just and inflexible. The horseman recognized Washington immediately, and instinctively took off his hat.

"You have information of the enemy, I am told," said Washington, the first to speak, for the other was silenced by the awe of that presence.

"Yes, may it please you, general," answered the other, starting as if from a spell.

"Speak, then," said the great chief, reassuringly. "Time is precious. You are a friend to the cause, I hope."

He said this, not as if he really doubted the man, whose truth he had read with one searching glance, but in order to give the embarrassed visitor time to collect his thoughts.

"Yes! I am a friend to the cause; and it is

that which has brought me here. You think, I am told, that the whole force of the enemy is opposite to you, on the other side of the creek; but I saw a large body of Hessians and British troops crossing at Jeffries Ford, above, as if to march down and take you in the rear."

Washington's brow exhibited no trace of excitement; though this intelligence, if true, was vitally important. He turned, calmly, to an officer beside him.

"You said—did you not?—that your scouts had swept the river, for the whole distance, and that there were no troops in sight."

"I did. We passed the fords above here, and no one was there. The man has made a mistake," he added, in a whisper. "Or, perhaps, he has been sent to mislead us purposely."

"I do not think so," was the answer, in the same tone. Then, in a louder key, and turning to the countryman, Washington continued, "How far off is this ford?"

"About eleven miles."

"You have hardly had time to come so far."

"Look how my mare is blown. She never carried me faster, though she is all mettle, as you may see."

The great chief, who had a passion for fine horses, looked admiringly at the small ears, wide forehead, deep chest, and powerful stifle, of the animal pointed out to him. The large nostrils were now distended and red as blood; the flanks were heaving; and she stood, leaning down, with outstretched neck, regardless even of the rich, aromatic herbage at her feet.

"You are right," said Washington, "she has come both far and fast, and is a splendid creature. But can you describe the country to me, so that I can understand where this ford is? My accounts differ so much from yours—I am told there is no such ford—that you must excuse me for being cautious."

"I can show you in a minute," said the man, eagerly; and he stooped down, and with his finger began to draw, in a rude way, in the sandy path that led up to the gate, a map of the vicinity. "Here is the Brandywine," he said, "here is where we stand—this is the course the creek takes—about here is the ford your scouts have been watching—here is the furthest point, a few miles more up, to which they appear to have gone—and here," he added, triumphantly, making a deep indentation in the sand, and looking up earnestly, "is Jeffries Ford, where they crossed this morning."

"You saw them cross?"

"Yes! They fired on and chased me. Only the speed of my mare saved me."

"What do you think of it, general?" said Washington, turning to another of the group.

The officer, a tall, portly personage, shook his head in the negative. "Our intelligence is too reliable," he said, "and it contradicts this man's in every particular. Gen. Sullivan, himself, saw you about just such a report, you know, an hour or two ago; and the general can't be wrong."

"Our intelligence don't contradict this in every particular, however. On the contrary, my dear Knox, this rude sketch agrees substantially with our maps, and only differs, if you can call it a difference, by going further. Really, Gen. Sullivan must have been mistaken."

"It is too long a circuit to make, and I may add, too brilliant an idea for Howe to entertain."

"We must not under-rate an enemy," said Washington. "It is, indeed, almost too great a circuit to execute in time. But suppose, gentlemen," for there was quite a group of officers listening, "that the manoeuvre has been actually attempted—are we not in a trap?"

The countryman, who had heard this discussion with increasing anxiety and impatience, and had only been restrained from interfering, by the evidently high rank of all about him, could restrain himself no longer.

"For God's sake, general," he broke in, "don't let them persuade you I am wrong. I am not mistaken; my life for it, I am not mistaken. Make me a prisoner—keep me till you find out the truth—and shoot me, or hang me, if I have deceived you."

"Where is Capt. Murray?" said Washington, turning to his suite, with that quick, decided air, which told that his mind was made up. "He was here but a minute ago!"

As he spoke, the neigh of a horse was heard, and a high-spirited bay, with all his trappings on, appeared coming around the corner of the garden, led by our hero, who, though older and more sun-burnt than when we saw him last, had still the same frank face and gallant bearing as formerly. Though not permanently attached to Washington's family, for he preferred active service in the field, Murray was, for the time, acting in the capacity of aid, during the illness of a friend and till a company could be had for him.

"Into the saddle and gallop for life to Sullivan," said Washington. "Tell him to wheel his division to the right, and be prepared for this attack in our rear. Stay there and see if you can be of service." And he added a few rapid orders, more in detail; and then, as Murray, leaping into the saddle, and giving the impatient steed his head, darted off, he turned to his suit and added, "And now, gentlemen, to your posts. I was, as you know, about to cross and attack Gen. Howe. We will stand on the defensive, however, for awhile. Ha! who is this?"

As he spoke, a rider, his horse covered with foam, was seen dashing from the direction which Murray had taken, though Murray was already out of sight before the latter had become visible. The next moment the messenger drew up at Washington's side, throwing his horse on his haunches, the froth flying from the mouth, the head flung up, under bit and spur.

"General," cried the man, breathlessly, "the British have taken us in our rear. They are now marching on Birmingham Meeting House, two miles and a half back. I saw them, myself, swarming like bees on Osborne Hill, which is opposite. Gen. Sullivan is over-matched."

"To saddle, to saddle," cried Washington, his eye kindling as it kindled only in battle, and his voice booming out, as he spoke, deep and awful as the thunder of sudden artillery. "You, my Lord Stirling, and you, Gen. Debarre, wheel your divisions and hurry to Sullivan's help. Meantime, we, here, will keep the ford."

The group broke up on the instant. There was a wild hurrying of feet, a tumult of rapid orders, a clanging of sword and spur, and then a dozen officers, on fleet steeds, darted off in as many different directions, riding for life or death.

Simultaneously the roar of a cannon, in front, was heard. Its deep boom echoing and re-echoing among the hills, announced that the battle of Brandywine had begun.

VIII. BRANDYWINE.

HECTOR never slackened his speed till he came in view of the enemy. Over brooks, over fences, he kept right on, his spirited horse snorting with excitement. In an almost incredibly short space of time, he reached his destination, and drew up, at Sullivan's side, near Birmingham Meeting House.

This ancient edifice still remains, a relic of an age long passed away. It is a humble, one-storied building, constructed of rubble stone,

and has attached to it, on two sides, a rude grave-yard, which is enclosed by a low wall. It stands on the summit of a long acclivity, while opposite, at the distance of about a mile, with a cultivated valley intervening, is Osborne Hill. As Hector drew in his horse, he saw that the enemy, who had rested for awhile on the slope of Osborne Hill, was about advancing to the attack, and that Gen. Sullivan had already made such dispositions to resist the assault, as were compatible with his comparatively inferior force and the little time left to him.

On came the enemy. A force of pioneers marched in front, assisted by such countrymen as they had pressed into their service. Then followed the Hessians, and after these the royal troops. Cornwallis in person led the attack, his martial figure conspicuous amid his gorgeous staff. Arrived at the bottom of the valley, the pioneers proceeded to remove the fence, which, at this point, divided two fields, the army pouring through the gap immediately, and advancing, at a leisurely pace, in battle array. Hector thought within himself that he had never seen so brilliant a spectacle, as that presented by the long lines of bayonets glittering in the sun, the splendid uniforms of the royal troops and the banners of the regiments that flaunted in the van; while the stirring music of the bands heightened the excitement of the moment.

Hector observed that Sullivan had posted his troops with considerable skill, taking every advantage of the character of the ground, and that a body of marksmen lined the low grave-yard wall. But he did not flatter himself with the hope of victory. He knew, that, even so holy a cause as that in which the Americans were fighting, could not prevail against greater numbers and superior discipline. The patriot force, at that time, was little more than a mob of raw militia men. It was not till Baron Steuben, in the winter following, introduced the Prussian tactics, that it became worthy of the name of an army. On the other hand, the enemy were thoroughly disciplined and in the highest state of efficiency. They had just been recruited by rest and refreshment; were conscious that they had surprised the Americans; and were full, therefore, of that confidence, which is so often the precursor of victory.

But Hector had little time for these or any other reflections. The Hessians were hardly within range, before the right wing of Sullivan, with the impatience of raw troops, opened fire upon them. The rattle of the volley had scarcely died away, the blue smoke was still

curling slowly up in front, when the Hessians gave a cheer, increased their pace almost to a run, and dashed in on the Americans. The struggle was short and fierce. Hector stood with his heart in his mouth.

"Ha!" he cried, "they waver—they break—the Hessians are among them—their flag is down—gracious heaven! they run in every direction."

The disorder, indeed, was spreading along the whole line. Only the few marksmen, stationed in the grave-yard, held their own. Close, unrelenting and deadly, they poured in their fire, cheering occasionally as they fancied they saw the enemy beginning to waver. But, brave as they were, they were too greatly outnumbered to prevail. As fast as the royal soldiers fell, the British officers cried, "Close up, close up," and the ranks, compacting themselves at the word, advanced, a resistless wall of fire and steel. That solid, moving mass was soon within pistol-shot; next it had come almost within bayonet-thrust; and now it was at the foot of the wall, and beginning, like a vast billow, to pour over it. To attempt to hold the place longer would have been madness. Reluctantly, therefore, the order was given to retreat.

Up to this time, Hector had not been, personally, engaged in the fight. But now that retreat was inevitable, he, with a few mounted officers, gathered in the rear, and prepared, to keep back the pursuit, by charging on the enemy.

"We must give time for our men to get off, or it will be a slaughter," he said. "The whole field is in confusion. Look in the orchard yonder! Our brave fellows are falling there like sheep. One charge among the red-coats, few as we are—we can but die!—who will follow me?"

He rose in his stirrups, as he spoke, and waved his sword. His comrades, catching his enthusiasm, answered with a cheer, and, closing compactly together, went at the enemy. The latter, thinking the courage of the routed troops completely broken, had not been prepared for such an assault; so that, when they saw the horsemen bursting through the smoke upon their flank, they magnified the numbers tenfold in their surprise, and temporarily recoiled.

But the insignificant numbers of Hector's troop were soon discovered, and a royal captain, shouting, "Rally by fours," massed them, partially, into a square, with fixed bayonets, the colors in the center.

"Meet them with the cold steel," cried the

Briton, and as he spoke, the square bristled with leveled bayonets, an electric wall of steel.

"Forward, forward," shouted Hector, and he rushed, with uplifted sabre, on the apparently impenetrable phalanx.

Nothing could have withstood that charge. Lifted with spur and voice, the horse made a terrific bound and landed almost in the center of the square, while the first man, who attempted to bayonet Hector, was cloven to the shoulder by his steel.

The gap, made by this rush, was widened, almost instantly, by the comrades of Hector pouring in. And now began a struggle, such as does not often happen in modern armies, a hand to hand, life and death-struggle, Homeric in its character. Hector had seized the color staff at once. But the captain of the company himself held the colors, the ensign having fallen just as he rallied his men; and in that captain, as he confronted Hector, the latter discovered the person he had rescued from the mob in Philadelphia.

The start of recognition was simultaneous on both sides. The antipathy of the two young men, not concealed on that occasion, was heightened by the circumstances under which they now met. The language then used by Hector had rankled in Mountfort's heart ever since, and he welcomed the present opportunity, which held out a hope of revenge. Hector, on his part, had not forgotten his promise, if ever Mountfort took up arms against America, to be the first to draw his sword upon him. Thus, in addition to the usual motives which control men in battle, there were personal ones now influencing both young men.

Of the two, Hector was, perhaps, the most powerful. Yet his adversary was no common one. At the time of the riot, the conduct of Mountfort had given our hero the impression that he was half a coward. But this was a mistake. To die ignobly at the hands of a street-population, and to fall honorably in the field, are very different things; and thousands, who would meet the latter fate unflinchingly, would quail at the former. Mountfort also was a skillful swordsman. But there is everything in the goodness of your cause. This lent superhuman strength to Hector. Hence the contest, though sharp, was soon over.

In less time than we have taken to describe it, Hector had wrenched the color staff from his antagonist, had disarmed him, had ridden him down, and now stood over him with sabre uplifted to cleave him to the heart.

Suddenly the idea struck our hero to carry

off his foe as a prisoner. His horse was a powerful one; the obscuring smoke rendered the project possible at least; and such an exploit would, in part, assist to restore the glory lost by a defeat. Throwing the color staff to a comrade, he stooped and jerked Mountfort to the saddle before him. The prostrate officer, disarmed, wounded, and taken by surprise, could make no resistance. Simultaneously, Hector plunged his spurs into his horse, and with a cheer to his companions to follow him, dashed through the smoke and disappeared; nor was it till he and his comrades had passed out of sight, that the British soldiers realized that their captain had been borne off ignominiously from their midst.

We will not tire our readers with an extended description of that memorable fight. How that Washington, at the ford, was startled, soon after we left him, by the firing in the direction of Birmingham Meeting House; and how, leaving Wayne to defend the pass, he galloped, as fast as his horse could carry him, to the assistance of Sullivan. How Wayne held his post, like a Paladin of old, till the defeat of Sullivan, and the rapid approach of the enemy in his rear, rendered retreat indispensable. How Washington, leaping fences to shorten the route, and guided by the rattling volleys, arrived on the ground only to find the broken columns of Sullivan, Stirling, and Debarre, driven in confusion, backward, like the wrecks of houses, barns, and mills whirled before a freshet. How Greene, at the orders of the commander-in-chief, cool and ready now that he was in face of the enemy, posted himself in the ravine which they still show you, between two woods; and opening his ranks as the fugitives came up, suffered them to pass through; and then, closing up, stubbornly opposed the triumphant foe. How the American artillery, galloping forward, unlimbered and opened rapid and sure on the advancing British. How Count Pulaski, borrowing the thirty life guards of Washington, plunged, like a thunderbolt, upon the enemy's column, rending it instantaneously. All this is told, at large, in the histories of the war; but need only be glanced at now, to recall it to the memory of our readers. The blood kindles, indeed, even at this distance of time, when the story is rehearsed, be it ever so hastily; for though defeat overtook America, it was brightened with so many deeds of individual heroism, that every brave soul cries impulsively, "Ah! what would I have given to have been there?" Return we to Hector.

Whispering sternly, at the first symptom of

resistance on the part of his prisoner, that any such attempt in the future would be followed by instant death, and backing up his word by holding a pistol at the captive's head, our hero held on his way, at full gallop, followed by his brother officers. The skirmish, in which they had been engaged, short as it was, had left them far in the rear of the retreating troops. As they now dashed along, they passed, continually, bodies of the royal troops, which were pressing forward in pursuit; and on more than one occasion, had to run the gauntlet of their fire. Escape, indeed, would have been impossible, but that Hector, who had been over the road once before, kept across fields, while the British principally followed the highway. But thanks to this, to the obscuring smoke and dust, to the speed of his horse, our hero succeeded in reaching Greene's troops in safety, who opened the way to him with a huzza at his dashing exploit.

"I beg your pardon, captain," said Hector, when he had reached cover here, stopping his horse, "for making your ride so uncomfortable, but the exigency, you know, was pressing. You shall now be released, if you give me your parole to follow the retreat, making no attempt at escape."

Mountfort, mortified beyond words at the manner of his capture, yielded the required promise sullenly, casting his eyes on the ground. But he could not withstand the temptation, as Hector turned away, of looking at the latter's retreating figure, with wonder, and even angry admiration.

"It is what I did not believe any man could do with me, especially one of so light a frame. But, by St. George!" and he felt his arm, "he has the gripe of a giant."

IX. THE QUARREL.

On the outskirts of the town of Chester, in the state of Pennsylvania, there still stands a small, old-fashioned house of brick. Late in the night after the battle of Brandywine, a party of American officers were supping at this house; for it was to Chester that the army had fallen back after its repulse. Though defeated, the patriots were not disheartened; and the discussion ran high, whether Washington would give battle again in a day or two, or whether he would move nearer to Philadelphia before attempting it.

Without, there was all of that confusion which attends even the most orderly retreat. The streets swarmed with soldiers, who were covered with dust and nearly exhausted from

the want of food; for some of them had tasted nothing since morning. Orderlies were passing to and fro; aids were hanging about the quarters of the various generals; all was bustle and excitement.

Suddenly the door of the house we have mentioned opened, and Hector, accompanied by his prisoner, entered the apartment where the American officers were snatching their hasty meal. At sight of Capt. Mountfort's uniform the discussion stopped at once. All rose to welcome the new comers.

"We are famished for something to eat," said Hector; "and I did not know where to go, in this confusion, till I heard that you were here, Major O'Byrne, and remembered that, where you were, there was a bit of crust at any rate. Allow me to introduce you to Capt. Mountfort, of the royal army, whom the fortune of war has made my guest for awhile."

Major O'Byrne was an Irish officer who had, long ago, left the British army and had emigrated to America, but who, on the breaking out of hostilities, had taken up arms for his adopted country. He was an old campaigner and a famous boon companion. Though rations were low with others, the major always managed to get supplies. The farmers' wives, in the neighborhoods where his detachment was stationed, complained, that, somehow, the foxes never before did such damage to their hen-coops, and that their best cows were going dry. He rose now, and, welcoming his guests with some pomposity of manner, said,

"Ye're welcome to what there is; but, barring the chickens, which are not so bad, it's a poor male after such a day. But I can recommend the whiskey. All the whiskey in this country is good, captain," he continued, addressing Mountfort. "From '55, when I first came over, in the old French war, all the way up, it's good. Suppose ye take a dhrop as a whetter to your appethites?"

The royal officer, accustomed to the rich wines of his regimental mess, hardly concealed his disgust at the plebeian drink tendered to him. He sat down, however, with more appetite to the rough viands.

"Yer army fought well, the day," said Major O'Byrne, desiring to be complimentary; "and General Howe deserves credit for his strategy. I didn't think it was in him; bad luck to him! It's counting on getting into Philadelphia before us, he is now, I suppose?"

Capt. Mountfort had been accustomed to the most exclusive English society; for he was rich in his own right, and was the heir-apparent

to an earlom: hence the somewhat coarse manners of Major O'Byrne were but little to his taste. He was still smarting, too, from the shame of having been captured in the way he was. Accordingly, he answered, with some hauteur,

"With all due deference to your better judgment, the fall of your capital, sir, is only a matter of time. Sir William will enter it next week, or the week after, just as he pleases."

"But what if we offer battle again? It's a long lane, ye know, that has no turnin'."

"What can your ragged peasants, whom you call soldiers," Capt. Mountfort answered, contemptuously, "do against our disciplined troops? We shall whip you wherever we meet you."

"As ye did at Threnton and Princeton," replied the major, with a laugh, which the rest of the company, however indignant at their guest's words, were too well-bred to imitate.

"Come, major," said one of the American officers, interfering, for he saw Capt. Mountfort flush up, "don't let us fight our battles over again, when the bottle stands waiting. I will give a toast we all can drink. Here's to the ladies, British or American: they're angels, all of them, whatever their nation!"

"Troth, they are!" answered Major O'Byrne, smacking his lips after draining his glass. "Ye don't find the girls here, captain, do ye," he continued, addressing Mountfort, "as fond of the red-coats as in the ould counthry?"

It seemed fated that the major, whatever he talked about, should say something to rouse the latent contempt of the royal officer for everything American.

"Since you will have an opinion from me, sir," answered Mountfort; "it is my experience, and the experience of all his majesty's officers, that your Yankee girls are quite prodigal of their favors."

More than one of the group looked from the speaker to his neighbor at a remark, which not only passed the limits of ordinary courtesy, but also challenged the tolerance which might be expected on the part of a prisoner. But no one spoke.

Hector saw that the major, more inflammable, was about to answer hotly: so he laid his hand on the old officer's arm, and replied for him, trying to give a less insolent meaning to Mountfort's words.

"Perhaps, Capt. Mountfort," he said, "you have not yet seen fair examples of our American women. New York is almost entirely of tory sympathies. You were but a few days, I think, in Philadelphia, where we flatter our-

selves the prettiest and most patriotic of our ladies live. Wait till you see them."

Either some perverse spirit possessed the royal officer, or he had deliberately determined to insult his entertainers, for he answered,

"Excuse me. We had one of your most famous Philadelphia belles in New York last winter, and we had no more reason to complain of her coyness than of that of others. Faith, gentlemen, flatter yourselves as you may, your sweethearts are all for us, when they get a chance. And none more so than this Miss Erskine, your Philadelphia belle."

More than one young officer, at this, scowled angrily at the guest who was thus violating every law of hospitality. But Hector was the first to speak. He knew that Helen had accompanied his father and aunt to New York, and he did not doubt that it was of her this royal coxcomb spoke.

"Do you mean Miss Helen Erskine?" he said, sternly, "the daughter of Judge Erskine?"

Capt. Mountfort regarded him with cool insolence for a moment, sipped at his glass, and answered,

"I do."

"It is false!" cried Hector, white with passion.

Everybody was on his feet in a moment.

"If I was not a prisoner," replied Mountfort, returning Hector's look of defiance, "you had not dared to use such language."

"Here's a pretty quarrel," cried the major, to whom a duel was more delightful than a dinner. "The English gentleman shall not want for a second, for I'll be his second myself; and as for his being a prisoner, we'll waive all that. Only leave it to me, and I'll arrange it." And he rubbed his hands with glee.

"I will accept your offer," said Mountfort, "and hope the meeting may come off at once—that is," he added, with a sneer at Hector, who had not yet spoken, "if this gentleman is not afraid to accept my challenge."

"I could not challenge an unarmed man," answered Hector, who had now recovered his dignity. "But I assure you, since I understand that you challenge me, your eagerness for the fight does not exceed mine."

"Then no time need be lost," said the major. "I've as pretty a pair of barkers with me as any gentleman might need. I always keep them on hand, ready for these little bits of pastime. We'll just slip outside the camp—I've the password—and settle this matter before we go to sleep, for to-morrow, I take it, we'll all be too busy. You and I will go first, if ye please,"

he said, familiarly taking the arm of Mountfort. "Faith! ye're a lad of speerit, and I'll see the fair thing done by ye, though I don't approve of your sentiments; and if Capt. Murray hadn't taken it up, I should have felt bound to do it meself." With these words the entire party left the house.

A walk of about half a mile brought the combatants to a bit of level greensward, close by the river side, where the major halted, declaring it was "just the sweetest place in the world for the job." Little time was lost in placing the combatants. The choice of position was decided with the utmost scrupulousness, and fell to the lot of Mountfort. It was a forcible illustration of the chivalry of the so-called code of honor of that day, that one who had violated the rights of hospitality to such a degree as to make every one present his personal enemy, was yet as secure of his rights in this contest, and knew himself to be so, as if he had been surrounded by the royal army.

"Ye will hould yerselves jist where ye've been put," said the major, "as gentlemen should, till I give the word, which I'll do, by saying, *One, two, three—fire*, and at the word *fire*, but not before, ye'll let drive. If either pulls trigger sooner, mind ye, I'll shoot him down meself. And now, are ye ready?"

"Ready!" answered both the combatants simultaneously.

In the pause that followed, before the major spoke again, Hector heard distinctly the low, lapping sound of the tide upon the pebbly beach below, the soft sough of the wind in some trees near by, and the wail of a distant whip-poor-will. Then came the deliberate tones of the major.

"One, two, three—fire!"

There was an interval of a second, at least, between the two discharges. The pistol of Capt. Mountfort went off first, and just as the major began to give the word "Fire!" Hector

was seen to whirl half-around, his pistol exploding ineffectually, and then fall heavily on his face.

All rushed toward him. One of the party gently turned him over, so as to bring his face uppermost. As this was done, the blood gushed in torrents from a wound in his side, his lips moved faintly, and they heard him utter, "Helen!" Then a quiver passed over the countenance.

"Good God! he is dead!" cried his second.

"And murdered!" said Major O'Byrne. "Ye fired before the word, Mountfort, ye villain; and ye shall answer it to me with yer life."

But on looking up no Mountfort was to be found. A dim figure was seen in the distance, however, rapidly vanishing into the darkness, in a direction opposite from Chester. The royal officer had taken occasion, when he found the rest absorbed with his victim, to consult his own safety in flight.

"He's out of range," said the major, who, at first, had pointed a pistol at the fugitive; "let him go. He's broke his parole as well as killed his host, and he's no fit company for gentlemen. But how's yer patient, doether?"

He addressed these words to the surgeon, who had been of the supper party, and who, having accompanied the combatants to the field, had been kneeling by Hector, examining the wound.

"Just alive and that's all. No human skill can avail him. Before morning a brave officer will be no more."

"God help him!" said the major. "It's what will come to us all, boys, sooner or later. But he died like a thrue soldier ought to, when he can't die in battle. We'll see that he has a decent buhrial, before we march, the morrow. Yonder's a light; it must be a farm-house: let us carry him up there, and lay him on a bed, that he may give up the ghost comfortably, like a Christian."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE MURRAYS OF MURRAY HOUSE.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON, AUTHOR OF "KATE AYLESFORD," "THE OLD STONE MANSION," ETC.

[Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1862, by Charles J. Peterson, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, in and for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.]

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 228.

X. PRISSY.

THE comrades of Hector, carefully carrying his inanimate body, soon reached the farmhouse. To their vociferous knockings no answer was returned at first. Finally, when Major O'Byrne threatened to break in the door, and had procured a rail for that purpose, an upper window was raised, a man's head projected, and a thin, hard voice demanded what was wanted.

"Here's a wounded officer," replied the major, "dead, or dying—open the door and let us in."

"Thee has mistaken this house for a hospital," said the man. "Take thy friend to some other place."

"It's one of the Quaker hounds," cried the major to his companions. "Break down the door till I slit his throat for him."

To understand the major's indignation, it must be explained that the Quakers of Pennsylvania, or Friends, as they preferred to have themselves called, were generally regarded as disaffected to the American cause. Perhaps this was unjust to them. Their religious principles taught them to bear testimony against war, and hence neutrality was a necessity with such of them as desired to be consistent. The hearts of many, however, were secretly with the patriots. A few even took sides, openly, against the king, and so forfeited their birth-right in their sect. It was a Quaker midwife, Lydia Darragh, who gave Washington notice of the plot to surprise him. It was a Quaker general, Nathaniel Green, who saved the Carolinas. The owner of the farm-house, however, was a man who thought only of money, and who, even if he had not been a Quaker, would have shut his door on friend or foe alike, if he had thought it would endanger his purse. But, fortunately for our hero, the farmer's wife was not only constitutionally tender-hearted, but also secretly in favor of the American army. She made her appearance at the window now, and such is the influence of true gentleness, that, at sight of her sweet, pitying face looking

over her husband's shoulder, even the angry major paused.

"Shame on thee, Jacob," they heard her say. "Thee forgets the good Samaritan." Then, addressing the major, she said, "Wait a minute and I will let thee in myself."

Her husband, thus rebuked, sullenly descended and admitted Hector, who was immediately laid on a bed, in the "best room," as the guest chamber is called in that part of Pennsylvania. The surgeon promptly proceeded to examine the wound. As the probe entered his body, Hector, who had hitherto been totally insensible, groaned.

"He is not dead," said the Quaker matron, who had been supporting his head; "he has only fainted. How does thee feel?" she said, addressing him. "Prissy, bring him some water."

The last words were directed to her daughter, a young girl apparently about eighteen, who had hastily attired herself and hurried down to see if she could be of use.

Hector closed his eyes and did not answer; but when the water came, cool and grateful from the spring, and the Quaker maiden began to moisten his lips with it gently, he opened them again and feebly smiled his thanks, showing that he was conscious.

"He'll worry through yet, bedad, with good nursing," said the major.

"Yes," answered the surgeon, who now produced the ball. "But had this bullet gone half an inch further to the right, all would have been over with him." He then proceeded to dress the wound, after which he said that rest was indispensable to the patient; and, looking inquiringly at the hostess, added, "It would be as much as his life is worth to move him."

"Thee need have no fears," replied the Quaker matron. "We will take care of thy friend till he is able to go away, if thee will only tell us what to do."

"I shall, I fear, have to leave this part of the country to-morrow," answered the surgeon; "but I can let you know how to act. The only

thing to dread is fever. If he gets bad, there is a country doctor, I suppose, to be had. But good nursing is what he chiefly needs."

The Quaker matron, disregarding the looks of her husband, who feared that harboring an American officer might bring him into trouble with the victorious royal troops, promised to follow carefully the directions of the surgeon, who, soon after, with his companions, left; Major O'Byrne vowing, emphatically, that "he'd nivir agin slander people whom he didn't know," and that, "if he was a marryin' man, he'd put in for the darter, bedad; for she looked as near an angel as houly St. Catharine herself."

And an angel, at least in her ministrations, Hector found her. Priscilla Lloyd was one of those gentle, loving creatures, all charity and kindness, who are the "salt of the earth." Like her mother, her heart opened, at once, to the unfortunate and suffering, whatever their creed, nation, or profession. Wherever there was sickness, for miles around, people sent for her mother, or, as she was called in the plain language of Friends, "Hannah Lloyd." Often the mother could not go, in which case the daughter was deputed in her place. Hence the latter had become almost as proficient a nurse as the former. No one could smooth a pillow so gently, or cheer an invalid with kinder words or smiles.

Of necessity much of the care of Hector devolved on Prissy, the mother being occupied with her dairy and the farm. It was a dangerous winter for the young girl. At first, Hector was too ill to talk. But his pale, wan face appealed to Prissy's sympathies. When Hector became able to sit up, when he began to while away the hours in conversation with his fair nurse, pity passed gradually into a deeper feeling. Yet she was ignorant, even to the last, of the state of her heart. She had been born with a love of everything beautiful. The songs of birds, the music of running water, the flowers, the trees, stars, clouds, had been to her a source of inexplicable delight. She would sit for hours listening to the melancholy wail of the whip-poor-will, or watching the harvest moon silvering river and field. Vague longings stirred her bosom for something higher and brighter than her monotonous life. Never, till she met Hector, had these aspirations been gratified. His cultivated tastes, his love of poetry, written and unwritten, his experiences of travel, and the enthusiasm with which he spoke of liberty, found an echo in her own hitherto unsatisfied nature. To her he was a revelation. Knowing only the sons of neigh-

boring farmers, she had not supposed it possible for any one to be so refined and deferential. For the first time, in her life, her intellect and tastes were gratified; and this while her heart was attacked through her pity and sympathies.

Hector was as ignorant as herself of the mischief that was being done. His affections were so entirely Helen's, his own self-approbation was so small, that he never thought even of the possibility of such a result. The parents of Prissy were equally short-sighted. The father was so engrossed with his farm that his daughter rarely occupied his reflections. The mother had been so strictly brought up in the tenets of her sect, that, if she had been told of Prissy's peril, she would have answered that it was impossible for a daughter of hers to love any one not of their persuasion. With all her large charity of heart, this was what she could never have forgiven.

The autumn wore on. Winter set in. Hector had become comparatively strong. He was already, indeed, talking of departing for the army, but as yet had been prevented from naming a day, by the assurances of Prissy's mother that he was still too weak to travel. One morning, when things were at this point, he suddenly entered his chamber and detected Prissy herself arranging his bed, which, heretofore, he had supposed had been done by the maid of all work. The color flew to her face, the tears came to her eyes. Hector caught the contagion of her embarrassment, and stammered some excuse for his return, he knew not what. This seemed only to increase the agitation of Prissy, who rushed by him and fled to her mother's room, where she burst into passionate weeping.

Now, at last, the truth began to break on her. "Oh! how silly I have been," she cried, "and to let him see, too, how I cared for him! I thought he would stay out for his walk as long as usual. But why, when he surprised me, must I show it?" She could find no consolation, however, in reasoning on her conduct. All she felt was that she could never look him in the face again.

As for Hector, a suspicion of Prissy's feelings, to his dismay, dawned on him, for the first time. He had moved to follow her, but, at this discovery, he sat down, hardly less agitated than herself. Though conscious of his entire innocence, so far as any design on Prissy's affections was concerned, he could not conceal from himself that he had given himself up to the pleasure of her society, in a manner that an unsophisticated girl, such as

she was, might misinterpret. He could find no words of condemnation strong enough for himself. Looking into his heart, he was obliged to confess that he had lingered, for the last fortnight, solely because it had been so pleasant to see Prissy's sweet ways. In his inexorable self-condemnation, he reproached himself with having betrayed the hospitality of the family. He sat long and moodily. When, finally, he rose, it was with the air of a resolved man.

"There is but one honest course left," he said. "I have been surprised into a great wrong, and I must go away at once. Poor Prissy!" And he felt so keen a pang of regret, that, but for his love for Helen, he would have sought the innocent creature and tendered her his hand in recompense.

Somehow, after her fit of crying was over, Prissy looked down at her attire. It was plain, at best, such as she often breakfasted in, but it had never seemed to her so plain before. She remembered it was time to dress. She took out her new purple and white striped Persian, her whitest petticoat, a muslin apron, a gauze cap and kerchief, and in this becoming dress, which she recollected, with a little flutter of the heart, that Hector had admired, went down stairs.

Hector was standing, thoughtfully, by the fire-place. He looked up at her entrance, and immediately came forward. She now first noticed that her mother was in the room and that tears were in her eyes. She also heard the neigh of a horse without, and glancing through the window, beheld Hector's charger, which had been sent to her father's barn the day after Hector himself had come. The farm boy was holding the horse, which was bridled and saddled, and had a portmanteau on his back.

"I must bid you good-by, Miss Prissy," said Hector, offering his hand. "I have been talking too long of going, and can delay it no longer."

If worlds had been given to her, Prissy could not have answered. She felt as if all the light and beauty, which had lately come into the world for her, was suddenly quenched, and forever. She mechanically let him take her hand, but could not prevent it trembling. Fortunately her mother came to her relief by answering for her.

"I tell Hector," said the matron, for after the custom of her sect, she called him by his Christian name, "that he is going away too soon. The army at Valley Forge, all agree, is in a terrible condition. He is weak still, and

will need little comforts which he cannot get there. But he is obstinate. He says he feels it is his duty. None of us, thee knows, must go against the light within."

By this time Prissy had summoned her fortitude to her aid. Hector had spoken low, she saw that his heart was full, and miserable as she was herself, she pitied him. She tried to smile.

"Good-by," she said. It was all she could utter.

"I shall never forget your kindness, Prissy, or that of your mother," he replied, wringing her hand unconsciously. "God bless you!"

He bowed, strode to the door, leaped on his horse, and galloped away, without trusting himself to look back.

The mother heard a deep sigh, when the last trace of the retreating figure had disappeared, and, turning quickly to her daughter, was startled by the sudden paleness of the latter. "Thee doesn't look well," she said, kindly. "Why, Prissy dear!"

The poor girl had fainted, and these last words burst from the mother, as she flew to catch her falling daughter in her arms.

We are not sure that Hannah Lloyd did not, at last, suspect the truth about Prissy. But, if so, she thought it best to say nothing to her child respecting it: only, from that day, she was more considerate than ever of the girl's comfort. Perhaps Prissy believed that her secret was known. But she shrank, with instinctive delicacy, from confessing her weakness, even to her mother, and set herself, resolutely, to eradicate Hector's image from her heart. She would have succeeded better, if she could have believed him unworthy. But hard as her task was, and desolate as life ahead looked, she knew it was her duty to forget the handsome young soldier, and she went forward, bravely, determined on victory, even if she died in the battle.

Ah! it is not only at the stake that there are martyrs, it is not only man that is heroic.

XI. VALLEY FORGE.

"CAN this, the condition of our army, be known to the people at large?" said Hector, as he rode along the lines at Valley Forge. "Surely not, or they would rise, with one voice, and remedy it."

It was mid-winter. A snow-storm had set in, the very morning he left the hospitable farm-house of the Lloyds, delaying him for several days; and now the rude huts of the army, which he saw all around him, were half-

buried from sight. Miserable objects, who once had been soldiers, crawled around, some without shoes, others with only a blanket to cover them. The icy wind blew cuttingly past, as he picked his steps along the half-broken road, inquiring his way of this and that shivering sentry.

"Heavens! is that you, Murray?" suddenly cried a voice, and, checking his steed, Hector beheld the surgeon, who had dressed his wound after the duel. "I began to think you had slipped through my hands after all."

Murray alighted at once. A soldier came and took his horse, while he followed into the hut, at the door of which the surgeon had been standing.

"You see us here," said the surgeon, after Hector had exchanged salutations with several officers huddled around a fire, all of whom he knew, but whom, at first, he scarcely recognized, so starved, and unshaven, and thinly clothed were they, "a very different set from what we were even after our defeat at Brandywine, much less different from what they are in Philadelphia, where there is no end, as we hear, of purple and fine linen, of rich wines and rare food."

"I had heard something of your sufferings, but what I have seen already surpasses my worst fears. Good God! can nothing be done?"

"The general does all he can. But for him I believe we should give up. Few of us, as you see, have whole garments; half a shirt is the ordinary allowance; Johnson there is the only one of the mess who has an overcoat; we have to sleep without beds, or blankets, and sometimes without even straw. Yet there are men calling themselves patriots, and who sit at their ease in comfortable homes, who denounce us, I am told, for inaction."

"You look famished, too," said Hector. "I thought I was thin and pale, but that was from sickness; but I am rosy and stout compared to the best of you."

"We have been, since winter set in, almost in a starving condition. Of course the camp fever is about. The rolls call for seventeen thousand effective men; we haven't but five thousand, to-day, fit to shoulder a musket."

"Great heavens!"

"And to think," said another, "that, while we are enduring all this, the enemy are feasting and junketing in Philadelphia, eating the very provisions which we can't buy, because we've nothing but riced continental money to offer!"

"By-the-by," said the surgeon, when they had conversed in this way for some time longer,

"we hear strange news, Murray, about that fellow who shot you. He is in Philadelphia, and they say is about to marry Miss Erskine, after all."

Hector did not know how weak he was, physically and otherwise, till he heard this startling news. The room suddenly swam before him. His companions; the low, smouldering fire; the articles in the hut, all whirled, in one wild dance, around and around. He felt, for an instant, as if he should fall.

"What is the matter?" cried one of the others. "You look like a ghost, Murray."

"Give him some fresh air," cried the surgeon, seizing him by the arm, and leading him to the door. "It is the heat of the hut, and the close atmosphere, after your long ride in the cold. Besides, you are not strong yet. There, you've come round already. Will you venture in again? Or shall we walk up to headquarters?"

"No," answered Hector, putting his hand to his brow, as if to rally his scattered faculties, "I will wait a day or two, I believe, before I report myself. I have some private business, after my long illness, that must be attended to, and as the public service does not require me immediately, I had better avail myself of the present chance. But you were speaking about Miss Erskine?"

"Yes," answered the unconscious surgeon, as they resumed their seats, "I was speaking of her engagement to Capt. Mountfort."

"I remember. But are you sure it is true?"

"You may well doubt it after the way in which he spoke of her, and which you so gallantly took up. Though, faith! if she has accepted him, she didn't deserve such a champion."

"She was my poor sister's nearest friend."

"Well, Summers, of ours, has tory cousins in Philadelphia, fine girls it is said, and very fashionable; and through them he gets all the gossip of the town. He tells us there's no doubt of it. 'Twas only last night, we were talking of you, and the duel, before him, which brought it all out. Mountfort, it seems, first met her in New York, as he said he had done. He was always hanging about her there, but without success; though he told us, you know, a different story. But it appears he has the old judge on his side now. Mountfort is rich in his own right, and next heir to an earldom; and Judge Erskine, if common rumor is true, worships rank and wealth."

"I believe he does," answered Hector, mechanically, absorbed in a desperate plan, which

he had begun to form on his first hearing of this reported betrothal.

"It's the talk of all the town, at any rate. The marriage is to come off, Summers' cousins say, early in the spring, when the bridegroom is to resign his commission; and the happy pair, that's the phrase, ain't it? are to go abroad."

Little did the garrulous, good-natured surgeon suspect the torture he was inflicting. He had hastened to tell this news, before anybody else should supplant him, because he supposed that Hector would be interested in it, as it concerned an old acquaintance. Neither he, nor any of the company, suspected the truth.

It was fortunate they did not, or else Hector's emotion, which he could not entirely conceal, would have betrayed him. With wonderful self-restraint, he managed to take his share in the conversation that followed, until he could find a fitting opportunity to leave the company. The surgeon would have accompanied him, but Hector shook him off, saying he must hunt up some friends across the river.

To the Schuylkill accordingly he took his way. He turned his horse's head into a wood and let the animal walk slowly on, while, with head leaning forward on his breast, he strove to think calmly. The winter wind, souging through the leafless branches, served as an undertone to his melancholy reflections.

"Alas! Prissy," he said, "you are avenged. What, innocently, I visited on you, has been visited on me in turn. The retribution is just."

He sighed heavily, and rode on, for some distance further, the very picture of despair. But Hector's was not a nature to give up. Gradually his thoughts recurred to the scheme which had flashed on him at first.

"It cannot be," so his reflections ran. "Helen could not have changed to the degree this tale implies. I do not dare to hope she loves me yet—I have been a fool, perhaps, to think she ever loved me—but one thing is clear, she was not deceiving me when she said she was, heart and soul, for America. I know she would not marry a royal officer."

His horse, suddenly stopping, roused him from his abstraction.

"Ha!" he said, "you do well, old fellow," and he proudly patted the animal's neck. "A single step further, and we should have gone over the bluff into the Schuylkill. But if this tale is true, it would have been as well."

He turned the horse's head, and began to ride toward the ford.

"I must see her," he said, "that is the only resource. I cannot endure this suspense. I will

visit Philadelphia in disguise, and watch my opportunity for a private interview with her. It is true, I run the risk of being seized as a spy; but if Helen has really cast me off, why should I care to live?"

With these words, he crossed the Schuylkill, and, stopping at a tavern, a mile below the ford, put up for the night.

All day he sat before the crackling fire of hickory, with folded arms, now planning his expedition, now darkly foreboding the future. He only roused himself when he was summoned to his meals; and of these he ate but little, much to the discomfort of the landlady, who told her gossip, with more sagacity than is usual in such cases, that "she was sure the poor gentleman was crossed in love."

When he retired, he could not sleep. He lay thinking of Helen and Prissy till long after the great, tall clock, down stairs, had rung out the midnight hour. At last, toward morning, he fell into an unrefreshing slumber, disturbed by half-fevered fancies. He dreamed, that, in attempting to enter the royal lines, he met Prissy, who stood, with outstretched arms, warning him to desist; that, in spite of this, he persisted; that he was captured, as she had foretold; that he had been tried as a spy, Helen herself, leaning on Mountfort's arm, appearing to give testimony against him; that the executioner was already knocking at his door on the fatal morning. Starting up in bed, at this juncture, with the cold sweat standing in great drops on his forehead, he heard the landlord without, saying, "Six o'clock, sir; you wished to be called at six, you know, sir."

In a moment he had rallied his memory, and, answering "All right," prepared to get up.

An hour after, having first hurt the landlady's feelings again, by leaving her hot buckwheat cakes almost untouched, he had mounted his horse and turned his head southward, in the direction of the capital.

"Lud bless us!" said the landlady, as he rode off; "I wouldn't break my heart, if I was as handsome a gentleman as him, for the finest lady of them all!"

XII. THE OLD HOUSEKEEPER.

Mrs. MARTIN, the old housekeeper at Murray House, sat, in the dusk of the evening, in her favorite room looking out on the garden. Her knitting lay idle in her lap.

Mrs. Martin was lost in reverie. She was one of those faithful dependants who are becoming rarer with every generation. She had originally been Hector's nurse, from which position she

had risen to that of housekeeper; hence she knew all the secrets of the family; and as her attachments were strong, her sympathy in their troubles was correspondingly acute. It was the present distracted state of that family, the father and son at variance—the one abroad, the other in the patriot army—of which she was thinking.

Mrs. Martin was not a pleasant woman to look upon. But she was none the less faithful to those she served. Nature, which had denied to her agreeable features, had given her, in requital, a warm, true heart. She was tall, gaunt, and muscular; indeed, almost masculine in her appearance; and as she sat now, in the twilight, her face had an even older look than her years would justify.

She was thinking of Hector. Never having had any children of her own, her entire affections had been centered on him. She had not seen him since that unfortunate day, when he had left his father's house, disinherited. For more than an hour she had been sitting there, listening to the winter winds that moaned in the great hemlocks without, and wondering if this dreadful civil war would ever cease, when, suddenly, she heard a step, and, looking up, beheld a tall figure before her, which, throwing aside its horseman's cloak, revealed the countenance of her master's son.

Her work fell from her lap. In the sad aspect of the face before her, she fancied she beheld the ghost of Hector, come to announce his death. With a suppressed scream she started to her feet.

"Hush!" said Hector, raising his finger, "or you will alarm the house. Surely, you know me, Mrs. Martin?"

The old lady, partially reassured by his voice, and more by this familiar style of address, peered at him through her spectacles, though she still trembled.

"Why," she cried, "it is—is it?—Master Hector!"

"To be sure!" said the latter, advancing and taking her hand. "I believe you thought I was a ghost."

"And glad am I to see you!" answered the housekeeper, joyfully. "But you have come far—you look tired and hungry—what shall I get you to eat?"

"Anything will do. A cup of tea, a few biscuits, a bit of relish, or whatever you are accustomed to take yourself at this hour, and which you can get without exciting suspicion. But first tell me if I can put my horse in the barn without being seen. I left him in the belt of firs till I knew if it was safe to stable him."

"There is nobody about the house but myself

and Sally—that's the half-grown girl in the kitchen—and she is always asleep by the fire when I don't have her at work. I suppose there is hay and oats left in the barn."

Hector did not wait to reply. When he returned, the table was set for his supper.

"I have locked the stable," he said, "and brought the key. I shall have to leave the poor beast here till to-morrow night, and shall trust to you to feed and water him secretly."

"I can easily do that, and no one the wiser. But where are you going?" And she spoke in some anxiety. "I thought you had come here to ask about us, and now you talk of going right off. It's on some mad business, I'm afraid, for the army."

"No, it is not; and I do want to hear about you all. What of my father?"

"Poor gentleman! You know, of course, he has gone to Lunnun again. I don't think he was ever rightly himself after you went away. He couldn't, it seemed, settle down to anything. And as for your aunt, she really worried herself sick. Ah! Master Hector, how could you break all our hearts?"

Her auditor sighed as he replied,

"Why did they go to England?"

"Why did they go? Well, to be sure, nobody ever told me why. Your father is a gentleman of few words, and your aunt was silent on this matter, too; but I believe the major couldn't bear the sight of the old place any longer. So, at last, your aunt told me, one day, they were going abroad; and a few weeks after that they went, leaving the house in my charge."

"Do you think my aunt urged him to go?"

"Yes. I know she was afraid, that, if he staid, he would say or do something which would bring him into trouble. There was a good deal of talk about him and Judge Erskine."

"Is Erskine Place shut up?" said Hector, with some embarrassment. "Or do the family spend the winter there?"

"It is shut up. The judge has moved his family into the city. He used to be quite for the king, you know; then, after the Declaration, he leaned to the Americans; but now that the royal general is in Philadelphia, who so loyal but he! There are grand times in town, I hear. All the tory young ladies, and some of the others too, are crazy about the officers; but they do say no one is such a toast as our own Miss Helen, who, however, won't have anything to say to them."

"I hear that Miss Erskine is about to be married," said Hector, affecting unconcern; "which may account for her indifference."

"Who to?" sharply asked Mrs. Martin.

"A Capt. Mountfort."

"I don't believe it," was the prompt and indignant reply.

"Why not?"

Hector endeavored to speak calmly, but his voice trembled with eagerness.

"Oh! Master Hector," cried the old housekeeper, "forgive me for being so bold; but I see what has brought you here; and if it's any doubt of Miss Helen, don't believe a word of it. It's as much as your life is worth to be seen. The dragoons go by, every day, and often stop. Take an old woman's word for it, and believe in Miss Helen's truth as you'd believe in the Bible. It can't be true—it can't be true!"

"To be frank," said Hector, thinking that he had better make a confidant of Mrs. Martin, "I am here to see Miss Erskine. I must go into the city for that purpose to-night."

"Have you a pass?"

"Of course not. Sir William Howe would not be apt to give a pass to a rebel officer."

"Oh! then don't go, don't go," cried the faithful old servant. "If you are found out, they will hang you. To think that one that I've carried in my arms should die like a common thief."

"There is no danger," replied Hector, cheerfully, "at least none that I fear. You see, my dear Mrs. Martin," he said, rising, "this is a matter of life or death to me. I have the very best authority for believing, that this Capt. Mountfort is a successful suitor for Helen's hand. They met first in New York, and, perhaps, it was there the attachment was formed."

"I don't believe it," stoutly said the old housekeeper again. "Miss Helen used to come over here, every week or two, after she returned from New York; and I never heard her say a word about this captain."

"The very reason," said Hector, with a sad smile, "why the story is probably true. They say, you know, that women never talk of those they love."

"But this is different. Miss Erskine is a gentlewoman; she knew you liked her; and if she had changed her mind, she would find some way to let you know. And what more natural than that she should drop a hint to me about it, thinking that I would be in a way some time to tell you?"

"How could she know you would see me? Nothing was less likely. You, yourself, were so surprised, that you thought I was a ghost."

"And yet, often and often, she has asked me if there was any news from the American army,

meaning from you. She would talk about the flowers, and about the major and your aunt, and sigh, and get up to go away, and then, just as she was saying good-by, she'd ask what, I'm sure, was the real question that brought her here. When the news came of a battle, she always stole over here to talk about it. She's no tory, is Miss Helen, even if the judge is; and I could tell why, if I chose. You needn't shake your head. Don't you think we women know each other's ways? Miss Helen's a grand young lady, and I'm only a poor old woman; but I see her heart, for all that; and she's as true to you as if she'd promised it before the parson."

"Have you seen Helen this winter?"

"Not since the family went to town."

"Then she may have changed greatly. I do not myself entirely credit the story I have heard. If I did, I should not be here. But it is a long while since I have seen Miss Erskine, and besides I hear she believes I am dead." And he told of his wound, and of the report that it had been fatal.

"Dear me! dear me!" cried the old lady, "and you were sick all this time, and I knew nothing of it."

"So," continued Hector, "I cannot rest till I have seen her and learned the truth from her own lips. Only let me be sure that there is no truth in this report; and I'll wait for her, and work for her, longer than Jacob waited and worked for Rachel. The war must come to an end, sometime; it will terminate in our favor; and then the judge will be glad, perhaps, to have a suitor for Helen who is on the winning side."

Mrs. Martin sighed. She saw that further expostulation was useless, and had the good sense to forbear. She began quietly to gather up the dishes, but the tears were in her eyes, and they fell fast as she worked.

"Good-by," said Hector, extending his hand. "If I succeed, you will see me to-morrow night: I will knock a double knock at your bed-room window, which, I suppose, is your old one, on the ground-floor back; and if I don't return," here the poor old creature burst into audible sobs, and interrupted him. "If I don't return," he repeated, with a firm voice, "tell Helen, when you see her, that I died with her name upon my lips."

The night was dark, the wind wailed ominously, and wild, threatening clouds hurried across the sky, as Hector emerged from the great hemlock avenue, and took his way toward Philadelphia, on his desperate enterprise.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE MURRAYS OF MURRAY HOUSE.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON, AUTHOR OF "KATE AYLESFORD," "THE OLD STONE MANSION," ETC.

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XIII. PHILADELPHIA IN 1778.

MRS. MARTIN had not exaggerated, when she had said that the royal officers had turned the heads of most of the fair Philadelphians, those of whig families not always excepted. In truth, when the war broke out, Philadelphia was the most aristocratic, probably, of all the American cities. John Adams, on repairing to the first Congress, wrote home, in amazement, at the princely style in which the richer people lived; there was nothing like it in Boston, not even at Hancock House, ostentatious and vain as the owner was. The Earl of Carlisle, when he came as a peace commissioner in the very year of which we are speaking, describes the elegant hospitality of the chief citizens. The Marquis de Chastellux, who visited Philadelphia as one of the French army, was in raptures over the ladies, praising particularly their ease of manner, their information, and their elegant tastes in dress. Mrs. Adams, the wife of the future President, spoke of the women as "a constellation of beauties." The wealthier families, with the exception of those who were Quakers, and who did not mingle in society, belonged to the Church of England, and had been connected, more or less, with the proprietary interest. Many of these had traveled abroad, some had been educated there; and their houses were decorated, we are told by an annalist of those times, "with valuable prints, or copies of the great masters." The same writer tells us that the dinner-parties of the Philadelphia magnates were famous for choice Madeira and French wines, and for West India turtle. The gentlemen of these families, with but few exceptions, either openly favored the royal cause, or practiced a selfish neutrality. They followed the example, for instance, of Judge Erskine, who privately told one of his old neighbors, over a choice glass of South-side, that, "for his part, he should stick to his ease and his Madeira; let who would be king, he well knew who would be subject."

But, when the British occupied the city, many of these moderates, thinking the royal arms

permanently in the ascendant, went over openly to the king. The ladies of their families, as a rule, had always been on that side. When the wife of Washington passed through the city, on her way to join her husband, their lately elected commander-in-chief, they very generally avoided calling on her. Now that the American cause seemed lost, they were more loyal, if possible, than ever; and toward the royal officers, many of whom united rank to their military position, they were all smiles. The handsomest houses in the handsomest city of its time, for Jefferson declared Philadelphia handsomer than London, far handsomer than Paris, were hospitably thrown open to these ever-welcome guests. Entertainments made the town as gay as a European capital. On their part, the royal officers returned these civilities with weekly balls, theatrical representations, and other amusements got up for the fair Philadelphians, till, just before they finally left the city, they gave the famous Meschianza, of which ancient ladies in our youth, who had figured as belles there, loved to talk in raptures sixty years after the event.

Of this fastidious and polished, but selfish, society, Miss Erskine, from her father's position, was unavoidably a member. But notwithstanding the reports, which, as we have seen, had reached Hector at Valley Forge, her heart was not interested, either in the gay festivities, or in any of the heroes of the hour. It is true that her engagement to Capt. Mountfort was the theme of general rumor. But this was in consequence of the captain's undisguised admiration for her, and of her father's evident partiality for the match. The cold-hearted, ambitious old judge left no means untried to induce Helen to favor the suit of one who was next heir to an earldom. In a dozen ways he endeavored to influence her, now through the vanity which he believed to be paramount in every female breast, now through some other fancied womanly weakness. He told her how much Major Stanley, "who may yet be Earl of Derby, next to the oldest peerage of that rank,

you know, Helen," admitted her; how Tarleton, the famous cavalry officer, did nothing but talk of her; how the Marquis of Lindsay, Lieut. Col. Harcourt, Sir John Wrottesley, and others, toasted her as "the beauty of the town." But, most of all, he dwelt on the high connections, the future rank, and the indisputable accomplishments of Capt. Mountfort. "My child," he said, "you must dismiss your foolish romance; the captain is such a match as is not likely to offer again: think how all the other girls will die of envy!" It was in vain that Helen declared she had disliked Mountfort from her first interview. "I am sure he is treacherous," she said; "I am never deceived in my instincts." "Spoken like a foolish girl," cried the judge; "it shows, Miss, how little you know of physiognomy, for Capt. Mountfort is the acknowledged soul of honor." But Helen was inflexible. She treated the captain with bare civility, and would scarcely have done this, if it had not been for her mother, who, always a peace-maker, and seeing that an open breach between father and daughter was inevitable, if Helen went too far, besought the latter not to break her heart. "It will all come right, by-and-by, my dear," she would say; "the captain will get tired, or Washington will drive the British away: ah! if young Hector Murray had only kept out of this war; it used to be the wish of my heart to see you two married; but God's will be done!"

Helen did not, among her intimates, disguise her sympathies for the colonists. She was known, in consequence, to the royal officers, as "the fair rebel." One of the wittiest of them had tried to rally her on her sentiments, but had met such a rebuff, that the scheme had not been tried again. "Before such eyes as yours, Miss Erskine," he had said, "no soldier could stand. If your Mr. Washington had had you in the van at Brandywine, he might have converted a retreat into a victory." "You ran away fast enough at Trenton and Princeton, my lord," was the retort, "without having to flee from my eyes." But her partiality for Hector was the secret of her own heart. Not even her mother suspected it; and her father, though he occasionally had misgivings on the subject, soon dismissed them, for his cold, selfish nature could not understand how any one could be faithful to the absent and unfortunate. Thus, though Helen still was a patriot, and though Capt. Mountfort never had any chance of success, she enjoyed, generally, the reputation of being his affianced bride, and was envied and abused accordingly. Her dear fifty

acquaintances (for society in Philadelphia, in 1778, did not exceed that number), who kissed her when they met and vowed eternal friendship before her face, wondered, behind her back, how Capt. Mountfort could see anything to like in "that proud Helen Erskine, who was always doing something odd, and different from other folk, as if she was better." Hence it was that the report of her engagement had reached Hector in so positive a manner.

The night Hector left Murray House witnessed a grand entertainment at Judge Erskine's. Sir William Howe and staff were there; and there also were all the tory families. A few of Helen's whig acquaintances had been invited, at her special request, and had, after much solicitation, consented to come; though the judge trembled lest Sir William should regard this civility as a proof of his being lukewarm in the royal cause, and even went so far as to apologize to the great man, by saying, "Old school-mates of my daughter, general, we mustn't be too hard on these girlish friendships." It was an entertainment long remembered, for the judge, wishing to propitiate the royal general, had spared no expense. Helen, from her position as daughter of the host, was compelled to play a conspicuous part in the entertainment. It was the fashion then, in Philadelphia, for each gentleman, on such occasions, to attach himself to some one lady, whose cavalier he remained throughout the evening; and Judge Erskine took good care that Capt. Mountfort should occupy this relation to Helen, since it would give even greater currency to the report of their betrothal, and so help, he thought, to bring about that result eventually. Helen was secretly annoyed at this arrangement, which she saw through, but could not prevent. It determined her to run every risk of her father's displeasure, by giving the captain a positive refusal, if he offered her his hand, which she had a premonition he would attempt, that night.

Nor was she mistaken. The captain had, by this time, become so passionately in love, that he resolved to put himself out of suspense, even at the chance of a rejection. He had, lately, begun to have a suspicion that the young officer, with whom he had fought his duel, had been more than a common acquaintance of Helen. There were not wanting envious belles to whisper to him, that, before the war broke out, there had been talk of a marriage between Miss Erskine and young Mr. Murray. The quick indignation, which the American had shown at his free use of Helen's name, seemed to favor this supposition. Such an attachment, if secretly

reciprocated by the young lady, would account for her indifference to him; and the thought made him mad with jealousy. Now Mountfort, when he had boasted of Helen's liking to him in New York, had given way to a momentary temptation to annoy his auditors: the fact was, much as he had been devoted to her, she had repelled him then, as since. And in this assertion, as in his subsequent escape, he had justified Helen's instinct, and refuted the judge's and the world's opinion, that he was "the soul of honor."

"I have long watched for an opportunity like this," he said, when he had succeeded in getting Helen, for a moment, into a little side-room, which she occupied as a sort of boudoir. "You must have seen, from my manner, ever since we first met, now a year ago, how much I love you——"

"Capt. Mountfort," said Helen, who had listened up to this point, impatiently, and now interrupted him, "I cannot hear such language. You will do me the justice to admit that I have never encouraged you."

"I do," answered Mountfort, abashed. "But, my dear Miss Erskine, is there no hope in the future? If," he continued, eagerly, "the most devoted and persistent devotion——"

"Again I say I cannot listen to such language," said Helen, and she moved toward the door.

"Stay a moment, only one moment!" exclaimed Mountfort, interposing to prevent egress. "Is there no prior preference?"

"That is a question," replied Helen, drawing herself up with severe dignity, "which you have no right to ask, and which I certainly shall not answer. Let me pass."

Mountfort, baffled in every way, was almost beside himself with rage. But he was compelled to conceal his feelings, for his own sake, and no one, for the rest of the evening, was more brilliant than he.

"Deuce take the witch!" he said, that night, when he returned to his quarters, "I wish I could get her out of my mind. But there's some consolation in knowing, that if she did love this Murray, he's dead and buried, and can never be hers. I should have liked to tell her so much, but there's a part of that affair I don't care about having known, or Sir William might look black on me. For that reason, I've never dared to tell how I got off from the rebels at Brandywine, nor say 'yes' or 'no' when I've been asked if I knew anything of this duel in which Mr. Murray is said to have been hurt. I remember Miss Erskine herself once asking me

if I'd heard of it: faith! it was as much as I could do to answer composedly; but I don't think she suspected me, and she evidently believed the whole story to be a fabrication. And, now I come to think about it, she can't be in love with the fellow; for she wasn't the least bit embarrassed, when she mentioned his name: or, if she is, she's as secret as the Sphinx, and curse her! she bewitches one as completely."

So saying, in the worst of humors, he betook himself to bed.

XIV. MAJOR ANDRE.

HELEN was sitting in her room, the day but one after Hector's arrest, when the servant announced Mrs. Martin. As such an event as a visit from the housekeeper of Murray House had never before occurred, she rose in some trepidation, her heart divining, instinctively, that the good lady was the bearer of ill news.

"Is anything the matter with the major or his sister?" she asked, assisting to remove her guest's shawl. "I see, from your face, that something has gone wrong."

"No, no," answered Mrs. Martin, with emotion. "I wish I had no worse news than that the major had a fit of the gout, or Miss Murray a turn of rheumatis. It is about Master Hector I came to see you."

"What about him? He is not——" She stopped, she could not utter the word "dead!" But she went on hurriedly, "There was a report here that he had been shot in some low duel, but I did not believe it, for nobody seemed to know anything about it."

"No," said the housekeeper, "he is not dead——yet——"

"What do you mean?" cried Helen, in an agony of suspense.

"He is a prisoner here in the city."

"One of those taken in the late skirmish?"

"No, no. Would to God he was! He was caught, night before last, entering the lines."

Helen turned as pale as death and sank into a chair.

"Is—not that—considered," she stammered, chokingly, "being a spy?"

"I believe it is."

"And the penalty—is—death?"

"Yes!"

For a minute, Mrs. Martin thought that Helen was dying. She sprang up, ran to the sufferer, threw open the window, and sprinkled Helen's face with water, crying, "Deary me, deary me! don't take it so hard, Miss Helen, for something may be done for him yet."

Gradually Helen revived.

"How did it happen?" she asked, making no apology for her emotion.

Mrs. Martin, in reply, described the appearance of Hector at Murray House, his purpose in visiting Philadelphia, and his promise to return within twenty-four hours.

"So I waited last night," she concluded, "from early candle-light, till after daybreak, but he didn't come. Fifty times, during the long, still hours, Miss, when everything was so quiet you might have heard a pin drop, I thought his step was coming up the gravel-walk, and I undid the door to let him in. As soon as I could, this morning, I left home. At the guard-house, a mile below our house, where I stopped to show my pass, people were talking of a spy that had been taken near there, the night before last, and sent in to Philadelphia. He was, they said, an American officer, and I soon found out it must be Master Hector, and nobody else. So I went, at once, to headquarters, where I learned all."

"You do not go on," said Helen, pale as death. "Tell me the worst."

"He is to die, to-morrow, at sunrise."

Helen did not faint away this time. The first shock had passed, and her naturally energetic character had rallied. It was not a time for womanish fears, but for prompt, vigorous action.

"This shall not be, this shall not be," she cried, starting up, and looking for her walking attire; "they dare not do it. He is no spy. It was to see me, you say, he came. He shall not suffer for my sake. Did he not tell them why he came?"

She had been eagerly tying on her hat, before the glass, as she spoke, while the sentences came forth in broken snatches; and she now turned suddenly on Mrs. Martin.

"I did not see him," answered Mrs. Martin, bewildered and frightened by her manner. "But I got a pass to do so, to-night, for, in case of the worst, I knew he would like to have me visit him. I thought I would come and see you, and maybe the judge could do something for him."

"No, no, my father will not interfere, there is no hope in that direction," said Helen, hurriedly opening a drawer, in a lofty walnut press, which, with its bright brass handles and elaborately carved feet and top, stood between the windows. "I never knew any one speak so strongly against another as my father against Mr. Murray, since this unfortunate war. But you have not answered my question. Didn't Mr. Murray tell them why he entered the lines?"

"No. He couldn't say what brought him, except that he wasn't a spy. I met such a civil, handsome gentleman—a Major Andre, I heard him called—who told me all about Master Hector, and seemed so sorry. He got me the pass, and when he was gone for it, another officer said to me it was a favor nobody else could have obtained, for they were very strict about such things. He was leaving the house, when I was talking to the sentinel, and heard the man refuse to let me in. When he learned I had been Master Hector's nurse, he asked me to walk into a parlor, sent for a glass of wine for me, and was as kind as if I had been his own mother, God bless him!"

By this time Helen had arrayed herself in the black silk hat and cloak, which was the fashion of the period. Her eye was brilliant with excitement. Her hands trembled with eagerness as she drew on her gloves.

"Come, let us go," she said. "I will see Sir William Howe myself. I will tell him why Hector, Capt. Murray, I mean, entered the lines."

Mrs. Martin gazed on her in surprise. Before the quick energy and heroic aspect of the young girl, the more tardy old housekeeper stood lost in admiration. Helen misinterpreted her hesitation.

"You do not think it unmaidenly?" said she, coloring violently. "But what care I what others may say? I cannot be his murderer!"

"I was not thinking of it, my dear Miss," said Mrs. Martin, rising. "I was blessing you, in my heart, for what you said. Let us go. You can save Master Hector, if any one can."

"I have met Major Andre," said Helen, talking hurriedly. "He dined here, with the general, a few days ago. He is Sir William Howe's favorite, and can get us speech of the general. He has a noble heart, it is said, and will not misinterpret me. This way, my dear Mrs. Martin; it is better to go out by the garden-gate; we shall be less noticed: and the way is shorter."

With rapid steps, with which the old housekeeper, tall as she was and still active, could hardly keep pace, Helen threaded the smaller and less frequented streets, keeping her face concealed as much as possible. After a ten minutes' walk, they came out, on Pine street, opposite St. Peter's church, which stood then, as now, amid its patriarchal trees, solemn and still, one of the few churches in cities realizing the idea of a house of God. A short walk now brought them to the head quarters of Sir William Howe, which had been established, near by, in the mansion of Gen. Cadwalader, a

patriot officer now absent in the army of Washington.

Fortunately for Helen, the crowd of orderlies, aids, and other persons usually lounging about the entrance, was, at this hour, absent, so that she was not subjected to the curious stare of strangers, which she had so much dreaded. The same sentry, too, was on duty, who had stopped Mrs. Martin, and recognizing the latter admitted her, with Helen, immediately, bidding an orderly, who opened the door, to call Major Andre.

Though the room into which the two women were ushered was unoccupied, Helen instinctively shrank into the shadow, and turned her face away from the door, lest some chance officer should look in and recognize her; for, in consequence of her father's position, she had already met many of the military family of Sir William Howe. It was not until she heard the voice of Major Andre, that, with a beating heart, she came forth from her obscurity.

This young officer, whose subsequent fate has thrown a melancholy and romantic interest about his name, was, at this time, in his twenty-sixth year. In stature he was about the middle height, and graceful in every gesture and movement. His features were almost as delicate as those of a woman. It was impossible to look into his face without feeling that intellect, refinement, and a tender heart, were each prominent points of his character. Yet there was no lack of manliness either in his expression. High courage, daring ambition, and strength to endure as well as to achieve, were all written in that strikingly beautiful countenance. His naturally elegant aspect was set off, in the eyes of Helen and Mrs. Martin, by the comely fashion in which his hair was powdered and tied in a queue behind, and by the gorgeous scarlet uniform which he wore as an officer in the royal army. He bowed low to Helen, recognizing her at once, but with a look of surprise, asking, in a voice as musical and modulated as that of a woman, in what way he could be of service to her. As he spoke, the smile that lightened up his face, banished, for the time, the melancholy of his eyes, which had made Helen, as it made so many others, feel strangely sad at their first interview; for, like the eyes of Charles the First, they seemed to prophesy an early and violent death.

Reassured as Helen was by the delicate tact of his manner, she was still too confused to speak, and fortunately Mrs. Martin came to her aid.

"It is about my poor boy," said the housekeeper, rising and curtesying, "that we have come, major. Captain, Mr. Murray, I mean, had a sister, who was Miss Erskine's dearest friend. The families have always been intimate, and Miss Helen thinks, if she could see the general, he might, perhaps, spare the young man's life."

It struck Major Andre as singular that Judge Erskine himself had not come to intercede for the captive; and he promptly suspected the true state of affairs. But he was a gentleman, by instinct, and he knew the delicacy of Helen would shrink if she divined what was passing in his mind: so he said, quickly,

"Nothing more natural, nothing more indicative of the tender and true hearts your sex all have, Mrs. Martin. I will see the general immediately. You will not, I trust, Miss Erskine," and he bowed again to Helen, "have long to wait, and meantime I will take care no one intrudes on your privacy."

"Bless his heart!" cried the housekeeper, when the door closed on him; "what a good, handsome gentleman he is! Not a bit like most of the others. Take courage, dear Miss Helen, for if the general resembles him, or his word can do anything, and they say he is all powerful, Master Hector will be pardoned."

In about half an hour, which, however, seemed an age to Helen, Major Andre returned.

"The general will see you now, if you please, Miss Erskine," he said, "and I will, if you permit me, conduct you myself. Mrs. Martin is to wait here."

Helen could thank him only by a look. The long suspense, and now the near prospect of the interview with Sir William Howe, had quite unnerved her, and she trembled, undisguisedly, as she rose.

"Be of good cheer," whispered Andre. "The general is kind-hearted. I will be in waiting to conduct you to Mrs. Martin when you leave his presence. Speak boldly."

With these words, he opened the door of the commander-in-chief's apartment, and ushered Helen in.

XV. SIR WILLIAM HOWE.

MAJOR ANDRE had interested himself for Helen to an even greater degree than his modesty would permit him to confess. His own life had not been without its romance. His attachment to the fair Honora Sneyd, though it had been unrequited, and though she had afterward married Mr. Edgeworth, the father of the celebrated Maria Edgeworth, had left him full of sympathy for the

unfortunate. That Helen was attached to the prisoner he had no doubt. That her attachment was not favored by her father he strongly suspected. No case more potent could have appealed to him. He had, therefore, during his half-hour's absence, used what influence he possessed with Sir William Howe, to induce the latter to grant Helen's petition.

But his usual success had not crowned his efforts. The general was not ordinarily a severe man, if misfortune could but force itself into his presence; his natural indolence, which made him leave so many things to his cruel provost-marshal that he ought to have supervised himself, prevented this. But on the present occasion there were many reasons why he was not in a mood for mercy. In the first place he was suffering under an indigestion, the result of one of those feasts, the day before, of which he was so fond. In the second place complaints had been made to him, from various quarters, that his troops were plundering in the city, and, as he desired to conciliate the inhabitants that remained, this had temporarily soured his temper. In the third place—and this, unfortunately, bore on Hector individually—the patriots were declared to have a plot for burning the city, and as the prisoner had obstinately refused to say what brought him to Philadelphia, he was believed to be the leader in the conspiracy. As Sir William had ordered a couple of his own men, who had been caught in the act of plundering, to be hung, he felt little disposition to listen even to his favorite aid, when the petition was, that he should spare an enemy's life.

"It cannot be," he had said, at last, almost gruffly; "and I wonder that you ask it. My enemies at home would have it all out in Parliament, if I was to pardon this young rebel under the circumstances. His being the son of a loyal subject is only an aggravation of his crime. His education, his *esprit du corps*, ought to have taught him better. For God's sake! let the higher classes be faithful to each other, in these leveling and revolutionary times, or we shall all go down, in company—monarchs, nobles, gentry, church, everything!"

So Andre had given up in despair. He knew that nobody could be more inflexible, if he chose, than Sir William; but he knew also that the general had a tenderer heart than the world gave him credit for, and he trusted that Helen, in person, would have better success. It was not often, indeed, that the general could resist a woman's supplication. Haughty as he was usually, to the sex he was always gentle.

Sir William was sitting when Helen entered;

but he rose immediately, and, though he ordered a chair to be handed to her, remained standing himself during the interview—a civil intimation that he desired it to be as short as possible. He was tall and portly, full six feet in height, and of stately and dignified manners. Helen had met him before, as we have said; but his imposing presence impressed her now more than ever. The sullen family gloom, which all the Howes inherited, was more visible in his face, this morning, than usual, and it made Helen's heart sink within her. She hesitated, in embarrassment, for some time, till the general kindly came to her aid.

"I am sorry to see you so distressed, my dear young lady," he said. "Major Andre tells me that you and the prisoner were old friends and neighbors, which, naturally, makes you solicitous for his safety. It was womanly and noble to come here to intercede for him; and I am, believe me, disposed to strain a point in your favor; but your own good sense must tell you that, in these matters, private inclination must often give way to public duty."

In spite of all this urbanity, Helen fancied she saw, on the part of the speaker, a settled purpose to evade her request and get rid of her as soon as possible. This fear gave her courage to speak.

"It is no ordinary inducement, as you may suppose, Sir William," she said, "that leads me to seek this interview. But of all Mr. Murray's former friends in this city I am the only one left. It is, peculiarly, my duty, also, to interest myself for him; for it was to gain a personal interview with me that he ventured to break your lines. There was, I can assure you, no political or military purpose in his visit. His old nurse, who is now waiting without, saw him the night before last, and to her he confided the real design of his coming. He may have been foolish and rash, but not criminal."

The confusion, with which she made this avowal, only heightened her beauty; and Sir William thought to himself that he had never seen any one so lovely, not even the famous Lady Sarah Lennox herself, who, gossip said, had come near to being queen of England, but who lived to a higher destiny, since she became the mother of the Napiers. But for the influences which we have described, he would probably have yielded to that pleading face. But they rendered him inflexible.

"I suppose this nurse was the person for whom Major Andre obtained a pass to see the prisoner?" he asked.

"Yes!" eagerly said Helen. "And if you

"I will see her, she will assure you that the purpose of Mr. Murray, in visiting Philadelphia, was private, not public, as I have said."

To do Sir William justice, he was moved by the earnestness of Helen. Nor did he doubt that she sincerely believed all she said. But as a military commander he had become familiar with the adoption of so many disguises, in order to obtain access to valuable information, or carry out some secret plot, that he did not, even for an instant, believe that our hero's real purpose was to see the girl only. Without a particle of romance in his disposition himself, it was impossible for him to understand a character like Hector's. He answered, therefore, evasively,

"I do not doubt your word, my dear Miss Erskine; and were I responsible only to myself for what I do, as commander-in chief of his majesty's forces, nothing would give me greater pleasure than to discharge the prisoner. But I cannot act in this matter according to my private feelings. The young gentleman has violated the laws of war, with a full knowledge of what he was doing, and the times are such that an example is indispensable. If, indeed," he added, moved, and wavering, for a moment, by Helen's distress, "any well-known and loyal citizen will come forward and pledge himself for Mr. Murray's future good-behavior, I may, perhaps, find an excuse to be lenient. There is your father; his principles are satisfactory; and, by-the-by, I wonder the judge did not come himself, instead of sending you. Surely he need not have feared but that he would be welcome."

When Sir William spoke thus, it was in entire innocence of Judge Erskine's hostility to Hector. He was too well-bred, had he known the truth, needlessly to lacerate Helen's feelings.

Helen blushed crimson as she answered, "My father, alas! sees nothing but evil in those who are in arms against the king. There is not, in all Pennsylvania, one who would be less likely to intercede for Mr. Murray."

The real truth now began to break on Sir William. He was sincerely grieved that he had said anything to pain his fair guest. Inwardly censuring Andre for having subjected him to this interview, which was the more annoying to him because of his naturally indolent benevolence of heart, he hastened to say what he could to console Helen.

"Well, well, my dear young lady," and, as he spoke, he respectfully took her hand, "do not despair. I am, as I have already said, not omnipotent in affairs of this kind. But I will see what can be done. Your visit has gone a great way, I assure you, to relieve me

of the necessity, which, otherwise, would have been imperative, of executing a painful duty."

Helen rose, at these words, feeling that the interview was over.

"If," resumed Sir William, desirous of softening still further his refusal, "you wish to see the prisoner, I will, to that extent, gratify you."

Helen nodded, mechanically; for she could not speak. This very offer was a proof, if any had been needed, that all hope was over.

The general hastily wrote the pass, folded it, and handed it to her, respectfully.

Passively Helen took the paper, moved toward the door, and courtesied, as Sir William himself opened it with a bow. How she succeeded in doing this she never afterward remembered.

Major Andre was slowly pacing up and down the hall without. He flew to receive Helen, and, by his soothing, gentle, considerate manner, he silently strove to comfort her. Helen trembled so violently that she could hardly walk, and, when she reached the parlor, where Mrs. Martin was waiting for her, sank into the first chair that presented itself.

Major Andre had not needed to be informed of the ill-success of her mission. He had caught the morose and irritated look of his chief, as the latter parted from Helen at the door; and he knew that he should feel the full effect of the general's anger, at their next interview. But he thought nothing of this now; for his sympathies were entirely engrossed by Helen, who, he saw, was endeavoring to summon all her fortitude to conceal her feelings from him. With an almost feminine instinct, he realized that his absence would be what she would most desire, since then only Mrs. Martin would witness her emotion; and, under pretence of being wanted by his chief, he excused himself from further attendance on the ladies, first pouring out for Helen, however, and offering to Mrs. Martin for her, a goblet of water, from a massive silver pitcher that stood on a salver in the apartment.

As Major Andre had expected, he found Sir William, when he attended the general's summons, angrier than he had ever seen him before. The young officer had to listen, for full ten minutes, to the irate reproaches of his chief.

"To put an end to such annoyances in the future," said Sir William, in conclusion, "I forbid you ever again to introduce a lady to me on such a mission. And as for this young apostate and rebel, who has been the cause of all this trouble, send Cunningham word to have him executed at day-break in the morning."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE MURRAYS OF MURRAY HOUSE.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON, AUTHOR OF "KATE AYLESFORD," "THE OLD STONE MANSION," ETC.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1862, by Charles J. Peterson in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, in and for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.]

CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 375.

XVI. THE PROVOST-MARSHAL.

THE provost-marshal's prison stood in Sixth street below Walnut, and to that place we must now conduct the reader, for it was here that Hector was confined.

Sir William Napier, the historian of the Peninsular War, has said that "the annals of civilized nations furnish nothing more inhuman toward the captives of war than the prison-ships of England;" and the jail in question was quite as worthy of this anathema as the worst of the prison-ships. As we have already hinted, Sir William Howe loved his own comfort too much to disturb himself about his minor duties; and hence his provost-marshal exercised almost unchecked control over prisoners. This officer was the notorious Major Cunningham, whose cruelties in New York and Philadelphia have made his name infamous. He was one of those moral monsters, who enjoyed inflicting pain merely for the sake of witnessing the agonies of his victims. In earlier times he would have made a fitting tool to superintend the rack, or light the fires of a Spanish Inquisition.

On the afternoon of the day, on which Helen and Mrs. Martin had visited head-quarters, this functionary was passing through the court-yard of the jail, which, at this hour, was crowded with such prisoners as were allowed to take a few minutes' recreation, at sunset, in the open air. His person was burly and coarse; his dress negligent; and he walked with a low swagger. In years he seemed about sixty. Excesses of various kinds, however, might have increased his apparent age. It would have been difficult to imagine a face more repulsive. Big, bushy eye-brows; inflamed cheeks; sensual lips; and a low forehead, made up a countenance that was rendered even more brutal-looking by the cold sneer, and relentless eyes. As he walked, he carried in his hand a small switch, with which he struck such prisoners as happened to be in his way, laughing, with savage glee, if they started with surprise and pain, or swearing at them, in a strong Irish accent, if they did not move quick enough for his wishes.

At last he reached the lower end of the court-yard, the prisoners scowling after him as he passed, and was about entering a door, which conducted to some of the cells, when his attention was attracted toward a group of men crouching in a corner. This group was composed of soldiers of the continental army, poor, ragged creatures, in whose gaunt and sickly faces hunger, if not positive famine, was written. On seeing the approach of their tormentor, they huddled close together, and appeared to have some object which they were endeavoring to hide from his inspection. His quick eye caught this suspicious movement, and, though his hand was already on the handle of the door, he turned short around and strode toward the group.

"What have we here?" he cried, striking a smart blow on the nearest prisoner, an action which compelled the man to start aside, giving the provost-marshal a view of the object the soldiers had been trying to conceal. "A pail of broth, I declare! Why, you cursed rebels, how dare you be eating in this way, when, if you had your deserts, you'd be kicking from a gallows' beam? Broth, indeed!"

The captives, cowed by long imprisonment, by harsh usage, but most of all by starvation, shrank before him, only one of the number venturing even to reply. This man, throwing one arm around the pail, as a father would protect his child, looked up and answered,

"We are half-dead with hunger, sir, and this broth has been kindly sent us from the town. We didn't know it was against the regulations."

"Sent you from the town!" he cried, in a rage, kicking the vessel over. "I'll have no such rebel sympathizing. There, eat now, if you can."

The poor prisoners saw, with dismay, their coveted meal pouring over the pavement. Their gaunt, wolfish eyes grew larger as they looked. For a moment they hesitated. But the pangs of hunger were too much for them. They gazed irresolutely at one another, then suddenly threw themselves on their knees and strove to lap up the broth with their tongues.

"Ha! ha!" laughed their persecutor, keenly relishing the sight, "how the rebel dogs fight for it! But look ye," he added, kicking one of them forward on his face, "none of this again." And, so speaking, he continued his progress.

A turnkey was waiting in the corridor. This man he directed to unlock a door before him. The next moment he stood in our hero's cell.

It was a small, damp apartment, with a brick floor, a grated window, and a low bedstead in one corner; altogether as cheerless a room as could be imagined. Hector had been sitting on the bed, his elbows on his knees, and his face buried in his hands; but when he heard the key turn in the lock, he rose, shook off all appearance of depression, and confronted his jailor.

Cunningham looked around the room, and then on the prisoner.

"A lucky fellow you are," he said, "my young game-cock. I'd like to know how it is you've managed to interest them so at headquarters. Here am I told to put you in this, one of the best rooms we have, when it's usual to give a spy a cell underground, such as you enjoyed at first, and good enough it was too. But Major Andre must have his way. It's well all are not so chicken-hearted as he is, or the service would go to the dogs."

Hector listened to this tirade in calm dignity. He had been informed of his sentence several hours before, and had been endeavoring to prepare himself since, as he best might, for the approaching change. We will not disguise, that, in those lonely hours, his fortitude, more than once, had nearly forsaken him. Death in battle he could have faced without a pang. Nor would death, even on the scaffold, have been so repulsive, if there had been sympathizing friends there to see how a soldier could suffer for his country. But to die unseen, or with no spectators but jeering turnkeys and a brutal provost-marshal, this was indeed terrible! He had tried to bribe his jailor to send a message to Mrs. Martin, for if he could see her, he thought, if he could give her a message for Helen, he should meet his fate with some resignation; but the petition had been denied. He had then asked for pen and paper; but this poor request also was refused. To his surprise, however, an hour or so subsequently, he had been removed from the underground cell in which he had been thrust at first, and which was green and slimy with damp, and had been conducted to the one which he now occupied, though no explanation had been vouchsafed of the cause of the removal. Left to himself a second time, he had tried to look the future in the face. But

he found no consolation anywhere except in his religion. This, fortunately, did not desert him. A firm believer in an over-ruling Providence, and in the great fact that this earthly life is but the prelude, and, so to speak, the preparation for a more blissful one hereafter, he had gradually become composed, if not resigned.

It was from this mood that he was roused by the entrance of Cunningham.

"It is, then, to Major Andre, that I am indebted for this improvement in my accommodations," he said, his cheek warming with a color at the insolence of his jailor, though, in his present frame of mind, he had no feeling of resentment—"I have heard of the major's kind-heartedness before; but know not what claim I have on him: it is his generous character alone, I suppose. God reward him, with similar tenderness of conduct, if ever the chance of war brings him to my unhappy condition."

The provost-marshal laughed a coarse laugh.

"You may spare your prayers on that point, youngster," said Cunningham. "The major is not likely ever to fall into the hands of your friends, the whole spawn of whom we shall crush out before the winter is over. Better keep your prayers till morning."

"It is about that I would speak to you," said Hector. "Cannot I have a clergyman? I asked, awhile ago, for pen and paper, which was denied me. As you would have comfort, yourself, in your last hours, do not refuse the request of a dying man. There are those to whom I would send a parting farewell."

"As for the parson," replied Cunningham, "we have an excellent one here, one of our chaplains, a good, jolly soul, with whom I often take a bottle, and who will help you drink one, to-night, or to-morrow, if you need it to keep your spirits up; and, if you ask my advice, I'll recommend it by all means. And as for pen and paper, maybe, after you've seen the people waiting outside to visit you, you'll not care for it."

"Somebody waiting to see me?" cried Hector, in surprise.

"Yes! two women. One of them a regular-built grenadier, and the other, I suspect, a young and pretty one, but she kept her face so muffled I couldn't tell. Ah! you lucky dog, to have the girls following you up, in this way," and he poked his finger, with a coarse leer, in the side of Hector.

A flush rose to our hero's forehead. His heart was in his throat. For in the elder female he recognized Mrs. Martin, and the

second, could it be? yes! it must be Helen, for who else was there to care for him?

The provost-marshal observed the agitation of his prisoner, and added, with what he thought wit, "Not that I will let them in if you don't wish it. I'm a man of feeling and allow none of my prisoners to be disturbed, that is, if it's against their wishes."

"Pray, admit them," answered Hector, eagerly, "and don't disturb us till necessary. It's the last favor I will ask."

"That's well said," brutally replied Cunningham, with a chuckle, "for you haven't many hours to live. But never mind, my young cock; I will make it as short, at the last, as I can; I always do for gentlemen. And now, while these women are with you, I'll go and drink a bottle with the parson, as I promised; and if he isn't too cursedly dry, and don't drink too fast, you'll have half an hour at least."

XVII. THE INTERVIEW.

We must now return to Helen. When she had taken the pass from Sir William Howe, it was with no other thought than of seeing Hector once more. She hurried home, utter despair at her heart. But gradually, out of the chaos of her mind, the idea rose up that he must be saved by some means. He should not die, she said breathlessly to herself. She knew it was only by stratagem, however, that his release could be effected. No prayers, no entreaties could induce her father to take a single step in behalf of Hector; and without the intercession of her father, Sir William Howe would remain inflexible. What, then, could be done?

She walked on nervously, sometimes by the side of Mrs. Martin, sometimes far before, turning a dozen projects over in her mind, pushing against persons who passed her, till the good housekeeper, utterly out of breath with the speed at which they had been going, clutched her by the cloak, saying, in a whisper,

"Miss Helen dear, the people look at you as if you were crazy. And maybe, if we walk slower, we can hit upon some plan to get Master Hector off. At any rate, we can see him, poor boy! and that'll be some comfort. He won't mind it half so much if you say a kind word or two to him."

Helen fell back to the slower step of her companion immediately.

"Oh! Mrs. Martin, if we only could get him off! We must, we must! At least, we must try!" And the despondent tone, in which the latter part of the sentence was uttered, told Mrs. Martin how little hope Helen really had.

"I wonder where he is confined!" she said, presently. "Could he get out of a window, if we took him a rope? You could conceal a rope under your dress?"

"Yes! But the windows are all ironed; for he's in the prison, you know, in Sixth, below Walnut."

Helen clasped her hands.

"There must be some way, there must be some way!" she cried, unconsciously accelerating her pace again.

"The Lord direct us!" said the housekeeper, striding along by her side.

The foot of Mrs. Martin was planted so firmly, as she trod, that Helen, in the high-strung state of her nerves, felt almost angry at such unavailing strength.

Suddenly Helen stopped. The tall figure, the masculine stride of the housekeeper had suggested an idea to her active brain.

"Mrs. Martin," she said, grasping her companion's arm, till she almost screamed with pain, "are you willing to run a great risk for Mr. Murray? I shall share it; but my scheme cannot be accomplished without you."

"I'd give my old, worthless life for the boy—God bless him!" cried the good woman, her eyes filling with tears. "But what's the plan, dear? I'm ready for anything. You see, I've not much head to think of a matter; but I'm not afraid to carry it out, whatever it is."

Mrs. Martin had grown loquacious with her new hope. But Helen scarcely heard her, so busy was she calculating the chances of success. At length she said,

"Have you another change of clothes here, Mrs. Martin?"

"Oh! I see, I see!" replied the housekeeper, a glimmering of the scheme breaking on her. "I can easily manage that. I've an old friend, in town here, where I'm going for my dinner, whose dresses I often used to wear, as she wore mine." She spoke in an ecstasy of joy; for she now considered Hector's liberation certain.

"Then be at our house an hour before sunset, and bring the dresses with you. Good-by, now; for we mustn't be seen together any longer than we can help. But, remember, if you're afraid of the risk, don't undertake it."

At the appointed hour Mrs. Martin made her appearance in Helen's room, where she found our heroine was waiting nervously for her coming.

"Now, my plan is this," said Helen. "You are about the height of Mr. Murray. You will put on your friend's gown over your own, and, when we are alone with Hector, we will dress

him up in it. Your cloak, hat, and spectacles, added to this, will, in the dusk of the evening, make a complete disguise. If we can escape the notice of the turnkey, when we leave the cell, there won't be much risk till we reach the gates. Nobody'll care much to stare at two women——"

"If they do, it'll not be at me—at Hector, I should say—it'll be at your pretty face, my dear!"

"I only hope, for once, they will. That's a bright thought of yours, and, if it proves true, will take away half the danger."

"Never fear!" said Mrs. Martin. "It's not often they get such a sight in a dismal prison."

"I have engaged, in our interest, our old coachman; the one we had so long, you know," resumed Helen, "and who has been keeping a small livery-stable since he left us. I could not trust our present one, lest my father should find us out. Pompey has a big, strong horse—he says—a fast trotter; that is just the thing for our purpose. He is waiting now, in the back street, with a covered wagon, so as to take us to the jail without our being observed. If our plan succeeds, he will drive Hector at once out to Murray House, from which he can easily escape. I must have your pass to get by the lines, however; when we release you from the jail, you can get another. I've been thinking it all over, and I have no doubt, when everything is done and past, there'll be no difficulty in getting you out, especially with Major Andre for our friend. You won't mind, I hope, spending a night in the cell; for that's the most that can happen to you."

"I'd spend every night in it, for a year, if that would do any good," was the answer. "But here's the pass," and she fumbled in her pockets. "No, that's the one to let me into the jail. Ah! here it is!"

Their preparations were now complete. They hurried stealthily down stairs, and were soon in Pompey's carriage.

As they approached the prison, Helen's heart failed. All day she had been nerved up by the hope of Hector's escape; but now, after so many hours of excitement, she suddenly flagged, and was almost inclined to give up the attempt. She was sure that the plan would be unsuccessful, and that her fair fame would be in everybody's mouth, without any corresponding result. When their vehicle stopped, she trembled so that she could scarcely walk. Nor did the brutal looks and manners of the provost-marshal, who was summoned to examine their papers, reassure her. Ignorant of Helen's influential position,

he indulged in a coarse jest at her expense. For a moment, with shrinking delicacy, she was again on the point of abandoning the expedition. But it was now that the presence of Mrs. Martin was invaluable. As the good woman had said, hers was no head to plan, but she was not deficient in capacity to carry out a scheme. In reply to the jest of the provost-marshal, the housekeeper had a ready reproof, which abashed and silenced even that functionary; and, while Cunningham was absent, she engaged the turnkeys in conversation, in order to divert attention, as much as possible, from her companion.

"This way now," said a turnkey, at last, entering the room where the two women had been waiting. "Major Cunningham told me to watch outside the cell, and not to let you stay over half an hour. So be quick in saying what you've got to say."

"Take heart, Helen dear!" whispered Mrs. Martin, as they followed their guide through the gloomy corridor. "We are sure to succeed!"

As the turnkey unlocked the iron-studded door, and stood aside for the two women to enter, Mrs. Martin drew back to let Helen pass in first. But the young girl pushed her forward, and followed timidly, while the great door banged to behind them, and was locked and double-locked.

Hector hardly saw the housekeeper; his eyes were seeking, in the shadows behind her, the shrinking form of Helen. He darted forward and took both of her hands.

"God bless you for this! God bless you!" he cried, looking into her face with his whole soul.

Helen's heart, which had throbbed so foolishly as she threaded her way along the passage, grew calm, now that the final step had been taken and that she saw Hector did not misapprehend her.

"I did not know of this till this morning," she said. "Mrs. Martin told me you were in prison here, and that——"

She could not, brave as she was, bring herself to speak the terrible words. Hector, seeing she hesitated, finished the sentence, calmly, "And that the fate of a spy awaited me."

Her composure almost forsook her now. This uncomplaining resignation was more than she could bear. But, crowding back the tears, she said,

"Sir William Howe has refused to pardon you, though every effort has been made. But you shall not die!" she added, almost fiercely. And she threw herself on his shoulder. His

arms were around her in a moment. He strained her wildly to his bosom. Then and there, he felt, they were betrothed, and that, come what might, she would be true to his memory.

"And you do care for me, Helen?" he whispered. "Then I can die happy!"

"You shall not die!" answered Helen, suddenly withdrawing herself from his embrace. "But no time is to be lost. You must dress yourself, as quickly as you can, in one of Mrs. Martin's frocks, and go out with me. There, you see, she has already slipped it off for you."

"Two came in, three cannot go out," he replied, looking from one to the other, and not yet comprehending the entire plot. "It is out of the question."

"But Mrs. Martin is to stay here," eagerly cried Helen.

"Oh! yes, I'm not afraid," said Mrs. Martin, "not in the least, not even if I stay all night. It can't be half as lonely as Murray House is, these winter evenings, with you all gone. Quick, Master Hector, quick—why do you shake your head?"

A faint smile stole to his face. The generous devotion of the housekeeper, the heroic courage of Helen, affected him indescribably.

"No," he said, "sweet as life is now, honor and duty are sweeter. I cannot accept liberty at your risk, my dear Mrs. Martin."

"Then they'll hang me with you," cried the housekeeper, doggedly.

"Mrs. Martin will be perfectly safe," said Helen, breathlessly. "I am sure I can get her released to-morrow. Do not let any false notions of honor keep you here. Time is precious."

"They'll be glad to let such an old cat as me go, I guess," continued the housekeeper.

"Do you know why I came to the city, Helen?" asked Hector, at last.

"Yes! Mrs. Martin has told me all," she said, blushing. "But you know now," she added, glancing up into his eyes for a moment, "that the report is not true."

"And the dear girl went, herself, to Sir William Howe, and told him you wasn't a spy, and why you came."

"Did you do all this?" cried Hector.

Helen answered by a look.

"Then do with me as you please," he replied, "my life is yours." And yielding to the housekeeper, who stood, holding up a stuff gown, ready to be his tire-woman, he continued, addressing the latter, "but I shall never forgive myself if I bring you into trouble, Mrs. Martin."

"For heaven's sake, make haste!" cried Helen, in nervous agitation, as she heard the turnkey pacing without. "They will come for us before you are ready."

It was not long now before Mrs. Martin had completed his disguise. As she put her spectacles, which she always wore, on him, she could not resist, even in those perilous circumstances, a triumphant exclamation.

"Well, I declare," she cried, "though I say it, that shouldn't say, I wouldn't have known you, myself, if I had met you on the street. There now, walk a step or two. Not such long steps," she continued, with a low laugh, "goodness me! they'd know you was a man at once. There, that will do better."

Helen was in a torture of suspense all this time. She feared the turnkey would overhear the good lady, who, in her excitement, was forgetting to speak in whispers.

"But now I must disguise myself," said the housekeeper. "I have it. I will throw myself on the bed, and draw the quilt over me, head and all, as if my grief, at parting, was more than I could bear. I think I'll even make the bedstead shake a little, with my sobs, eh! Helen, dear?" she added, with a touch of humor.

A knock was now heard at the door. "Time's up," cried the surly voice of the turnkey. The next moment the keys were turning in the rusty lock.

Helen's heart stopped beating. Mrs. Martin flung herself on the bed. Hector whispered a word of encouragement to his companion, and motioned for her to precede him, as their respective characters demanded. His perfect self-possession restored Helen's.

"Thank you for letting us stay so long," said Helen, engaging the attention of the turnkey, and slipping a guinea into his hand. "Go on, Mrs. Martin."

The turnkey, surprised by such an unusual gratuity, and suspecting that she who gave it must be of high position, bowed clumsily, somewhat abashed by her presence, and Hector took this occasion to slip ahead into the gloom of the corridor unobserved.

Immediately after, the door was heard to shut, and then the key to turn in the lock.

"Courage," whispered Hector, to his companion, "half the danger is over."

They soon reached the audience room, which, once passed, Hector would be free. The provost-marshal, evidently feeling the influence of the bottle he had been drinking with the chaplain, stood at the door, waiting to inspect them. But, fortunately for the success of the fugitives,

his eyes, as well as those of his satellites, were monopolized by Helen, whose beauty was a rare spectacle in such a place, and exercised its softening influence even on those coarse natures. Fortunately, too, Cunningham, when half-inebriated, was disposed to be sentimental.

"This way, my young lady, this way," he said, under the influence of these feelings; and he bowed with something of the grace and courtesy of the real gentleman, as he tendered her his hand.

Helen shrank from the touch, as if it had been that of a snake. But, happily, she controlled herself before the provost marshal observed her disgust. Hector, on his part, would have given much to have knocked the brute down.

The result of all this, however, was that nobody regarded Hector, who was suffered to pass unmolested. Soon the great, outer gates swung open, and Helen and he stood in the open air. A minute after, and they were safe in the carriage.

"Thank God!" cried Helen, as she sank back, almost fainting, in the seat.

She soon rallied however, and, while the quick trot of the powerful horse came to her ear as the sweetest music, hastened to tell Hector of the arrangement she had made for his further escape.

The wagon now stopped. Helen looked out.

"We must part," she said. "This is our garden-wall. Pompey has the pass, and will tell the sentinels that his mistress is in a great hurry, fearing to be benighted, so, if you'll keep back in the carriage out of sight, there'll not be any more risk."

Hector drew her toward him. She did not resist.

"Till better times," he said, as he pressed a kiss upon her lips, "and till I can claim you as my own."

She leaped lightly from the carriage, and the moment after disappeared within the garden-gate, of which she carried a key. But, before she turned to close the door behind her, she paused for a look and smile at Hector, the memory of which cheered him through many a weary bivouac subsequently.

The foresight of Helen proved correct. Pompey told his tale well, and prevented Hector being disturbed, by averring that his mistress was tired and sleepy. So the sentry, merely glancing into the carriage, suffered it to proceed.

The next morning, soon after daybreak, Hector reached the camp at Valley Forge, just in

time to contradict the report of his own execution, which a spy had brought out.

XVIII. CONCLUSION.

THE good housekeeper did not long remain undiscovered. About an hour after sundown, the provost-marshal made his appearance at Hector's cell, accompanied by the chaplain, both feeling the influence of the potatoes in which they had been engaged. Discovering that his prisoner was flown, Cunningham broke into a violent rage, and, for a moment, Mrs. Martin feared some personal indignity. She stood up, courageously, however, telling the provost-marshal "to touch a hair of her head if he dared," for that she had influential friends, boldly naming Major Andre himself as one of them. But who she was, or whence she came, she stoutly refused to say, and hence Cunningham knew not where to send in pursuit of the fugitive. The housekeeper bore herself, indeed, with such confidence, that the parson whispered to the provost-marshal that the escape had evidently been winked at, in high quarters, and "that, for his part, if he was in the major's place, he'd be very careful how he meddled with the old woman." Cunningham, on consideration, thought it best to take this advice, and retired grumbling, but he sent off a messenger to Major Andre, immediately, to show that he, at least, had executed his duty.

We may be sure that the major took no hasty steps to pursue Hector. His duty compelled him, however, to acquaint Sir William Howe with the escape, which he did as soon as the general rose from dinner, for that high functionary never allowed himself to be disturbed, at this meal, by anything short of a great battle. Sir William was in a placable humor, for the part he had been discussing had been excellent; and besides, in his secret heart, he was not sorry at the turn which affairs had taken. "Well, well," he said, "it can't be helped, I suppose; we did our duty; and it would have been a pity, too, to have put to death the son of so good a subject as Major Murray. God help me! I wish this civil war was over, and that his most gracious majesty, or somebody else, would replenish my fortunes, which, for one so nearly connected with the crown, are poor enough. That last election contest nearly ruined me. Never stand, major, never stand for a disputed seat in parliament." So the matter dropped. The authorities kept their own counsel, for very excellent reasons, and Helen and Mrs. Martin kept theirs; and hence not even the judge heard, till long years after-

ward, of the narrow escape Hector had made, or of his daughter's part in the escape.

Judge Erskine, true to his selfish instinct to be always on the winning side, commenced to cool toward the royal cause as soon as he found that the British would be forced to evacuate Philadelphia; and when that event occurred, he was prepared, among the first, to deplore the blindness of the king, the incapacity of Howe, and the folly of those who opposed the people. But though he was tolerated in consequence of these expressions, he was not trusted. His conversion was too late, and smacked too strongly of interested motives, to inspire confidence. There was even talk, in one or two quarters, of bringing him to account for his past delinquencies. It was said that he ought to pay, out of his fine estate, for his toriyism. But some unseen influence interposed to save him. The judge never knew to whom he was thus indebted; but Helen did.

Major Murray remained abroad till after the surrender of Cornwallis. But his opinions regarding the war, and consequently his feelings toward Hector, had gradually been undergoing a change. He began to ask himself if the colonists might not, after all, be right in their sentiments, disloyal as they had appeared to him. Once having got so far, it was easy to see where it would end, especially when his sister was continually longing for a reconciliation with Hector. Accordingly, when Yorktown fell, he took passage for Philadelphia. Miss Gloriana had already written, by a preceding ship, to her nephew, who hastened to meet his father at the wharf, as if he alone had been to blame for the separation. Major Murray was surprised into a full forgiveness, in consequence, and wept on his son's shoulder, as Jacob wept on that of Joseph.

There was nothing now to delay the marriage of Hector and Helen. The ceremony, accordingly, took place in St. Peter's church, in the presence of all the fashion and notabilities of the city. The bride was dressed, so the ladies said, with great taste; but we will not venture to describe how, lest our fair readers should regard it as "perfectly hideous," a phrase which our great-grandchildren will doubtless apply, quite as dogmatically, to the style of this present June, in the year of grace eighteen hundred and sixty-two. We have seen a picture of the bride, however, painted about this time, which represents a face of the rarest loveliness.

The young couple lived at Murray House, which the major insisted on giving up to them;

he and his sister remaining, however, as guests. After the peace, Mr. and Mrs. Hector Murray went abroad for a couple of years, and would have remained longer, but for the major's declining health. They were among the first Americans presented at the court of St. James, where the beauty of Helen attracted almost as much attention as that of the fair Gunnings had, a generation before. In London, they met Sir William Howe, who recognized Helen immediately. "Ah!" he said, "I knew how it would end, when I heard, madam, that you had outwitted me, which, to tell the truth, I was not sorry for, even then."

But Sir William and Hector had a graver subject to talk about, when they were alone together, an opportunity which Sir William soon sought. It was in reference to Andre, whose last moments chance had enabled Hector to alleviate, and whose fate he had tried, in vain, to avert. "*Non ignara matis*, my dear Sir William," he said, "you know the hackneyed quotation—I do not question the justice of his fate, nor see how, under the peculiar circumstances, even policy could have pardoned him—but I was once in a somewhat similar condition, though, in my case, there was no intention of playing the spy, and I could feel for him as others could not. I have no doubt that Washington, in his secret heart, would have been glad if Andre could have escaped. Ah! war is a stern necessity," he concluded, "and if it was not for the common sentiment of brotherhood, which mitigates its ferocities, it would be more frightful still." To which Sir William, more from organization, however, than philosophy, assented: and so they parted.

Mrs. Martin continued to officiate as housekeeper, at Murray House, to the day of her death, which was delayed till the beginning of the present century. She lived to see, in extreme old age, a daughter of Helen rivaling the early beauty of the mother, though that mother had continued, till the capital was moved from Philadelphia, to be the most lovely matron at the Presidential receptions. While Mrs. Bingham lived, she and that lady were the reigning toasts: when Mrs. Bingham died, Mrs. Hector Murray reigned unrivaled.

Judge Erskine survived to a great age, dying about the time of our second war with Great Britain; for these men without hearts, these mere intellectual machines, "burn to the socket." The latter part of his life was spent chiefly in his library. He could be seen, every day but Sunday, sitting at the window of his dusty office, a thin, bent figure, with the book held

within an inch of his eyes. From early morning till late in the afternoon he remained at that post, acquiring information which he rarely imparted, for after seventy he never visited, and never wrote for publication. At last, one day, his seat was empty, and the heavy wooden shutters bowed. "Golly!" said irreverent street urchins, "the old judge has dried up and blown away."

His wife had preceded him many years. As she grew older, her naturally sweet character became even lovelier. In her advanced life her face was a type of the highest moral beauty, when everything is eliminated that is of "the earth earthy," and when the countenance shines with a spirituality that seems descended on it from a better world.

Mountfort, after his rejection by Helen, became conspicuous in what would now be called the "fast set" of the British officers in Philadelphia. He was hand in glove with Lieut-Col. Birch, and the cause of great scandal to the staid citizens. Indeed, his conduct became such that even the tory public, at last, cast him off, and Sir William Howe had to intimate to him

that it would be better for him to resign. A year or two after he fell in a disreputable brawl.

Major O'Byrne, whom we had nearly forgotten, made his last campaign at Brandywine and Germantown, falling in a duel, the following winter. One of the cabal, that was seeking to disgrace Washington, happened to express his sentiments in presence of the major, who challenged him on the moment. The parties fought, and both fell, the major mortally wounded. His last words were to inquire if his adversary was much hurt. "He is dead," answered the second. "Then I die happy," said the major, the blood pouring from his wound, at the effort to speak, "I have rid the world of one scoundrel, at least."

Prissy married, after the war, one who was in many respects worthy of her. But even when she had become a matron, her heart would sometimes turn back, though for a moment only, to the romance of her girlhood, as we often, on waking, think, with a sigh, over a beautiful dream gone forever.

THE END.

THE OLD STONE MANSION.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON, AUTHOR OF "THE VALLEY FARM," "MABEL," "KATE AYLESFORD," &c.

[Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1859, by Charles J. Peterson, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, in and for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.]

CHAPTER I.

"MARGARET," said my mother, feebly.

I glided to her bed-side joyfully, for she had slept so long I had begun to be frightened. I kissed her, arranged the bed-clothes, and softly smoothed her hair.

She looked up at me with a wan smile. I remember that wasted, yet beautiful face as if this had happened but yesterday.

"Does it snow yet?" she said.

I stepped to the window. The storm, which had raged all day and during most of the preceding night, had subsided. The sun was just setting, and the snow-banks, which had drifted, here and there, against the houses on the opposite side of the street, were tinged with a delicate rose-color. A few flakes, blown from the roofs, floated lazily down. The shouts of the boys, playing snow-ball, came to the ear with a muffled sound.

"It is clear, mamma," I answered, "and so pretty. I hear sleigh-bells." And I did not turn my head, but waited, child-like, to see the sleigh, for I was but six years old.

"Thank God!" she answered, with a sigh of relief. "He will surely come now."

Her tone made me look quickly around. How dark and close the room appeared!

"Who will come, mamma?" I asked.

She did not answer. She did not even raise her eyes. She saw something on the bed-quilt apparently, which she tried vainly to pick off.

"Mamma!" I said, taking her hand, with a feeling of vague alarm.

She looked at me like one in a dream. Slowly her wandering faculties seemed to come back.

"You are cold," she said.

I was both cold and hungry. I had eaten nothing all day, nor had there been any fire. I gave one quick glance toward the dead ashes in the stove, to see if they were visible from her pillow; and finding they were not, answered, evasively, with the forethought which care and sorrow had already taught me,

"I feel cold to you, because you have a fever."

"Yes! I must have had fever all day, to have slept as I did. I am very thirsty now. Won't

you take the pitcher and bring me some fresh water from the pump?"

At any other time I would have shrunk from the task. I dreaded the long, dark entry of the strange boarding-house, and the rude boys in the street. But now I rose with alacrity.

"Stay, darling," she said, as I was about to go. I approached the bed-side. She took my head feebly in her hands, drew my face toward her, kissed me, held me a little off, and earnestly regarded me. Her mouth began to quiver: the tears gathered in her eyes.

"Poor little lamb!" she said. Then, lifting her dimmed sight to the ceiling, she murmured, "Father in heaven, protect my orphaned child!"

It took me some time to reach the pump, for I had to break a path through the snow, no easy task for my tender feet. I was a long while, afterward, in filling my pitcher, for the pump worked with difficulty. I saw a big, ill-looking boy standing on the opposite corner, working up a snow-ball vigorously in his hands and eyeing me menacingly. At last the pitcher was filled, and I stooped to raise it. At that moment, whiz! came the snow-ball, as hard as ice, hitting me on the wrist. I fell, and the pitcher, striking the pump, was broken into pieces.

The pain in my wrist was so acute, that I believed it was broken. But rage and indignation was, nevertheless, my first impulse. "Oh! if I was a man," I said to myself, as I struggled up, half smothered with snow. I heard a jeering laugh. But catching sight of the broken pitcher, I remembered it was the only one we had; I thought of my mother's thirst; and at that thought I burst into tears.

"Boo—hoo—hoo," mocked the boy, flinging another snow-ball, which hit me on the cheek.

He stopped suddenly. I heard a heavy blow. I looked toward him. He was struggling up out of a snow-drift, while another lad, about the same size, but of a very different aspect, was standing over him, rolling up his sleeves, as boys do when about to fight. The mute challenge, however, was not accepted. The bully got up, spluttering and cursing; but one look at his antagonist was sufficient; he burst into a

how, as if he was nearly killed, and ran off homeward.

The lad, who had thus interfered in my behalf, gazed after him contemptuously, for an instant, and then crossed over to where I stood. He was dressed neatly, even elegantly, and had an easy, self-possessed manner, very different from that of the boys of the poor suburb where we lived. Two great, dark eyes, eloquent with sympathy, looked down on me as he took my hand, and asked if I was hurt. I stammered something about my wrist being broken. He said, "Oh! I guess not," cheerfully. There was such manliness and courage in his carriage and looks, that I felt reassured immediately.

All at once, however, I remembered the broken pitcher, and began to cry again. He seemed puzzled for a moment, but then brightened up.

"Ah! I see," was all he said. "Wait a minute," and before I knew what he meant, he darted into a shop near by, reappeared immediately with a new pitcher, filled it with two or three quick strokes at the pump, took my hand, and bade me cheerily show him the way home. It was all done in less time than I have taken to narrate it. Before I recovered from my bewilderment, he had touched his cap and disappeared; and I was standing alone, in the cold, narrow, dark hall.

It was only for a moment. Remembering my mother, I hurried up stairs, reaching our room door out of breath.

I had expected to hear my mother ask me the cause of my delay. But she did not. I crossed to the foot of the bed, and poured out a glass of water; yet still she was silent. She did not even look toward me. Though it was now quite dark in the chamber, I could see her white face. It seemed so ghastly, a sudden terror seized me. I dared not speak, nor advance, but stood, with the tumbler-shaking in my hand and the water spilling out. Still that same fixed, strange look! My terror, at last, became too great for silence.

"Mother!" I said; but below my breath.

No answer. The white face, still turned upward, remained immovable as ever.

"Mother!" I shrieked, rushing to her side.

Still not an eyelid moved. She would never hear me again in this world. I realized that she was dead, though I now beheld death for the first time. I threw myself on the body, wildly calling on her to wake up, kissing her, imploring her not to die, frantically uttering shriek on shriek, till I lost all consciousness.

The next few days are almost a blank in my recollection. Looking back at this distance of time, they seem enveloped in a sort of haze. An

unutterable sorrow was almost all that I can recall. Yet I remember, in a dreamy way, waking up to find our fellow lodgers gathered around me; I remember being torn from my mother, and sleeping with a stranger, who nevertheless was very kind to me; I remember, afterward, the next day, I suppose, a big, red-faced, important personage, with huge gold seals that impressed me with a high idea of his importance, chucking me under the chin, saying he had come to take me away, now that my mother was dead, and telling me, when I began to cry at this, that I "mustn't mind it, it was better for her, poor thing, and for me." I recollect, also, the darkened room where the coffin lay; the whispered conversations; the awe on every countenance; and the being lifted to take a last look on that dear face, which now I could hardly recognize, it was so cold and white. I have a faint memory, too, that I shrieked, clung to the coffin, and said I would not leave my mamma; and that afterward, I sobbed myself to sleep, crying, "Mamma, mamma, do come back to me, dear mamma."

Then follows the recollection of a long journey, in which the pompous gentleman accompanied me. At last, one day, we alighted at the door of a splendid mansion, in a great city, a city even larger than the one where I had lived before. A blaze of lights almost blinded me, as we entered the hall. When I recovered from my bewilderment, a richly dressed lady, holding a little girl by the hand, stood before me; and she and my traveling companion were looking at me and talking of me.

"That is your aunt, Margaret," I heard the gentleman say, "and this is your cousin, Georgiana. She's a poor, sickly-looking thing, isn't she?" he added, turning to his wife.

Neither the lady, nor the little girl, offered to kiss me. The latter held by her mother's gown, and when I would have approached, drew back as if either frightened or disgusted. My pride, for even then I had pride, was up in a moment. The coldness of my aunt, the aversion of my cousin, and the contempt of my uncle sunk into my heart, and embittered my life, not only for that evening, but for years afterward. God help your little ones, mother, if ever they become orphans!

That night I was put to bed in a lonely, cheerless room, hastily made ready for me, away up at the top of the house. In my ascent to it, I passed the large, luxurious chamber, which my aunt and uncle occupied, and where my cousin slept in a pretty little crib by their bed-side. An errand called the maid, who had me in charge,

into this apartment for a moment. The soft velvet carpet, the crimson curtains, the wood fire blazing on the hearth, gave it such a warm, home-like air, that the bare, cold floor of my room and the curtainless bed, seemed to me more cheerless even than they were; and the tears fell as I undressed.

"What a funny child it is," I heard one of the maids say to another, with a laugh, for a second servant had joined us, no doubt from curiosity. "She puts her stockings into her shoes, and each shoe in its place, under the chair, just like a little old maid."

"She's had to look out for herself, that's plain," said the other, "and isn't like Miss Georgy down stairs."

"I wonder what beggar's brat it is?"

"Hush!" said the other. "She isn't just that. I've heard all about it, and will tell you, by-and-bye."

My heart was full. It was as much as I could do to keep down the choking sobs. When I had undressed, I was tempted, for a moment, to get into bed, without first kneeling down, as my mother had taught me, to say my prayers, for I felt, instinctively, that the maids would laugh at me. But after a short struggle, I slipped down at the side of the bed and began. One of the servants began to titter. This disturbed me so that I forgot what I had to say. I could only remember one sentence of my old prayer, and that was no longer applicable: "God bless mamma and make her well;" and at this, my little remaining composure gave way, I burst into audible sobbing, and in that state was lifted into bed by the less giddy of the two maids. Here I buried my head in the covers and wept myself to sleep.

Such was my first night in my uncle's house. Such was the beginning of my real orphanage, for, while my mother lived, though I was fatherless, and often cold and hungry, I had some one who I knew loved me.

CHAPTER II.

I LOOK back on the years spent in my uncle's house and wonder how I survived them. I was made to feel, in every way, that I was an alien and incumbrance there. My uncle, perhaps, was less blamable than any of the others; was, indeed, ignorant of many of the indignities put upon me; but even he never loved me. His wife disliked and tyrannized over me, for she was one of those natures who was jealous by organization; and she hated everybody who came into competition, in any way, with Georgiana. As

for my cousin, though she had some good qualities, she was spoiled by indulgence; and was the tool of her mother. There was not an hour in the day that I was not made to feel that I was a dependent. The servants, like most of their class, were time-servers, and insulted and abused me, because they saw no one loved me.

But the world knew nothing of this. My aunt was too prudent to provoke public opinion against her. She was not ignorant of the wisdom of keeping up an appearance of being kind to her husband's orphan niece. I was, therefore, sent to the same school with Georgiana; and if not dressed as elegantly, still dressed suitably. I ate at the family table, and sat in the family pew. All this, considering the treatment I received in the house, exasperated me. I heard my aunt praised for her generosity, when I knew it was a falsehood. My temper became soured; I was regarded as sullen; I thought everybody disliked me. I shunned the companionship even of girls of my own age. I became indifferent to dress, because everybody praised Georgiana and nobody praised me; and went by the name of sloven. I recall the weary, weary days at school, where I heard other girls talking of their happy homes, when I had none. I even see, sometimes, in fancy, a tall, thin, awkward, sandy-haired child, whose fingers were always soiled with ink, and whose hair was often unbrushed, the jest of half her classmates and the pity of the rest: and I look back on that child, oh! with what inexpressible pity; for I think of myself, in those long and dreary years, as of another person entirely.

I was naturally high-spirited. But I came at last to bearing everything, not meekly indeed, but in silence. The worm did not even turn on the heel that crushed it. Yes! sometimes it did. I remember once, that Georgiana had just received a beautiful wax doll, a miracle of mechanism as it seemed to me then; and I ventured to take it up, one day, when she was out of the room. How bitterly I thought that no one had ever given me anything a tithe so beautiful! I was still gazing in wonder on the doll, as I held it in my arms, when my cousin came back. She flew at me in a rage, snatched the doll away, slapped me on the face, and then, though I had not dared to strike her back, burst into a passion of screams, which brought my aunt, the nursery-maid, the house-maid and the footman, all rushing into the room together. Without stopping to inquire about the facts, my aunt seized me, shook me till I was breathless, and threw me toward the maid, whom she directed to put me to bed supperless, which was accordingly done, the maid telling me,

all the while she was undressing me, what a wicked child I was. I brooded over this injustice in silence, but when I saw Georgiana alone, the next day, I could contain myself no longer. For once I rose in rebellion. I called her by every spiteful epithet I could think of, and at last began to beat her. "Oh! if I could only tear off your long ringlets, which your mother and you are so proud of," I said; "if I could only make your face ugly forever." For this, of course, I was punished, and more severely than before.

Another time, Georgiana was jeering me about my poverty, and boasting of her father's riches, and of what a great heiress she would be. I had, somehow, picked up certain items in our mutual family history, and I retorted,

"Poor as I am," I said, "my father, at least, was a clergyman; and yours," he was a large provision merchant, "is only a miserable pork-dealer."

"I'll tell pa that!" she cried, angrily. "I'll tell him you call him names!"

"Do," said I, "and say, that, while his grandfather ran away with the tories, my mother's grandfather was at Bunker Hill."

She was white with rage, for we were both, by this time, old enough to understand our country's history, and unfortunately my taunt was but too true.

"And you may say," I continued, pursuing my triumph, "that while your grandfather made a fortune by smuggling tea, mine was one of those who boarded the ships in Boston harbor and threw the tea overboard."

She could not forgive me for this, and not long after, an opportunity for revenge presented itself.

It was the custom, at the school which we attended together, to devote one afternoon, each week, to criticising what were called compositions. Every scholar was expected to write an essay the night before, which the teacher, after dinner, criticised in presence of the whole class. On one occasion, the theme assigned us was "A Mother's Love." I recall, even at this day, the feelings under which I wrote. Often as the image of my mother had been present to me, never before had it come up so vividly. It was in an agony of emotion, if I may say so, that the words flowed from my pen. When the essay was finished, I remember, I was still so excited, that I clasped my hands, and sobbed, "Oh! mother, dear mother, come and take me away!"

When the class had assembled, the teacher, addressing me, said,

"Did you write this yourself, Margaret Gray?"

"Yes, ma'am," I replied.

She looked at me doubtfully, for a moment, and then began to praise the composition, when Georgiana rose from her seat and interrupted her,

"Please, ma'am," said my cousin, "Margaret didn't write it. I saw her copy it out of some big book in father's library."

I was struck dumb with amazement. I knew that Georgiana was not always truthful, but, as yet, I had only heard her tell falsehoods to escape blame. The deliberate malice of this assertion, and its unblushing coolness, literally confounded me. I stared at her with an amazement, that was mistaken for the consciousness of guilt. The teacher's face grew dark.

"Margaret Gray," she said, severely, "I knew you were sullen, slovenly, and sometimes disobedient; but I did not think you would tell a deliberate lie." She paused an instant, for I turned white with rage. "Yes! I use plain words," she went on, "for, to pretend another's work is your own, is the wickedest of lies. You will stay in for an hour, after the school is dismissed, and wear, all the week, while in school, a white paper pinned on your back, with the word 'liar' printed on it."

I made no reply. I tried, at first, to speak; but could not; I choked. If, at that moment, I could have got at my cousin, with a deadly instrument, I believe I would have killed her.

I was, ever after, a marked girl, in that school. I avoided my classmates, in consequence, more than ever. Before this, I had taken some pride in composition; but now I wrote carelessly on purpose. Often, when I detected Georgiana copying her essays, which had always been her habit, I was tempted to betray her; but I resisted. "No," I said, "I will not be so mean." At last, I grew so unhappy at school, and so defiant and indifferent, that I was dismissed as an example. My aunt, at first, refused to send me to another: she said it was wasting money, and that I might "reap as I had sown;" for she was fond of quoting Scripture. My uncle humphed, twirled his watch-keys, and looked at Georgiana with an expression that said, "Thank heaven *our* child is different." But after awhile, another school was found for me, where I finished my education. It pains me, even yet, to think of those days. Often and often I wished, with bitter tears, that I had never been born. I heard at church, and I read in my Bible, that there was a God, all-powerful and good; but sometimes I did not believe it. "He would not permit such injustice," I said. If it had not been for my mother, I should have

become, literally, an atheist. But I still remembered her early instructions, I still cherished the hope of meeting her in a better world. Sometimes, in dreams, I would even see her: we would walk by cool waters and green meadows; she would smile on me as of old; and I would be supremely happy.

From these dreams I would be aroused by the harsh voice of the servant, calling me to rise; and I would have to get up in the dim, early daylight, and dress on the bare floor, in my fireless room.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN I was about sixteen, an event happened, which gave me the first happy hours I had ever spent in my uncle's house. A new daughter was born to the family. The babe came after such a long interval, and when the hope of so great a blessing had ceased for years, that, for a time, it softened and refined all. From the first, the child took a great fancy to me, a fancy which, I need not say, I returned. My heart, so long shut out from love, lavished all its treasures on this little darling. I can never think of her, even now, without happy tears.

She was, in some respects, a precocious child. I remember the wonder with which I recognized the first gleams of intellect in her, when, one day, as I carried her in my arms, she pointed to some flowers on the paper-hangings, and on my stopping, picked out, with instinctive taste, those that were really the most beautiful. From that hour I watched the rapid development of her mind with intense pleasure. Long before she could talk, I began to tell her little stories, which I am sure she comprehended. She felt sick, and it was I that nursed her, day and night, till she recovered. The first moment of extatic happiness I had known from my orphanage, was when she was strong enough, she put her arms around my neck, kissed me, and called me "dear Maggy." She was a demonstrative child at all times. Oh! how sweet was the patter of those tiny feet, as she toddled along the entry, early on summer mornings, to ask to be taken into my bed.

The humanizing influence, which little Rosalie brought with her, did not entirely die out. When she was in her second summer, the family, on her account, was ordered to the sea shore. Annually, ever since I had lived at my uncle's, my aunt and Georgiana had gone out of town in the summer: now to Newport: now to Saratoga; now to Niagara; now to Lake George. But as invariably I had been left at home. But now,

such was the attachment of Rosalie for me, I had to be asked to go.

There was a great contrast, however, between the gay and dashing heiress and myself. Georgiana dressed in the height of the fashion, and, though not beautiful, had a figure that made up stylishly: she was accordingly surrounded by admirers, and imitated and envied by her own sex. I had, long since, grown out of my slovenly days, but I dressed with studious plainness, for I had but a scanty allowance, and as I was passionately fond of books, a good deal went for them. The thought of any one caring for me never suggested itself to me as possible. Generally, I disliked gentlemen, for what had I in common with prosy *bon vivants* like my uncle, or silly dandies such as crowded about Georgiana? My manner, also, in society, was absorbed. Half the time I did not see the dances, nor hear the music. I expressed no surprise, therefore, when I discovered, accidentally, that the retiring young girl, who stole silently to her seat at the table, and to whom a servant, when the dessert came in, brought Mrs. Elliott's child, that she might give it its dainty allowance of ice-cream, and see that it got no more, was governess, and ate at the first table in this capacity. I only smiled to myself. What did I care, I said, what was thought about me?

I used to sit in an arbor, that overlooked the sea, and read by the hour; and this confirmed the general impression as to my position. It was the first time I had ever seen the ocean, an event in any one's life. I never tired of looking at the waves breaking on the beach below; at the white sails in the offing; at the sea-eagles hovering over the surf; or at the fishermen launching their boats. Moonlight especially had a charm inexpressible for me. It filled me with a sense of a different existence. One stormy night, when the spray was blown over the lawn to the very hotel, and when nobody but the bather ventured out, and he only to assure himself that the bathing-houses were not being washed away, I wrapped myself in a thick shawl, and stole forth. Never shall I forget the scene, as the great waves, magnified by the darkness, heaved up out of the gloom, and thundered, whitening, down, shaking the very shore. When I returned, a general sneer went round: and I heard more than one whisper of "wants to be romantic," "I wonder Mrs. Elliott permits it."

One of the most assiduous admirers of Georgiana was an Englishman, handsome, and about thirty, and who had, in great perfection, that air and manner which belongs to good society. His dress was studiously unostentatious, and his sole

jewelry a magnificent cameo ring. He had a low, exquisitely modulated voice, which it was a pleasure to listen to, irrespective of the words he uttered. Few men had equal tact in conversation. He seemed to read character intuitively, and talked accordingly. With Georgiana his conversation was principally of the great people whom he knew abroad. To believe him, he was intimate with Lord John Russell, then prime minister of Great Britain; knew Louis Napoleon, just elected Prince President, intimately; had drunk Johannisberg at Metternich's own table; had been invited to Russia, on some secret, but important business, of Nicholas; and was possessed of the *entree* of every court in Europe. As to the aristocracy of England, from the Dukes of Norfolk and Devonshire down, he pretended to be either personally acquainted with them, or to know from reliable hearsay, all about them. He certainly had a fund of anecdote and gossip, especially respecting the female members of the British nobility, which, if not true, was, at least, amusing. I used to hear him discourse, by the hour, on those themes; for they were favorite ones with Georgiana; and, somehow, he always happened to lounge into the parlor, about noon, when everybody except my cousin and myself was either bathing or sleeping. I soon began to suspect that he was a mere adventurer. Georgiana, however, did not think so. More than once we had a warm discussion regarding him.

"I've no patience with you, Margaret," she said, one day. "How could Mr. Despencer know so much about the British nobility, if he was not one of their set? Then his voice. It is the very ideal of a finished English gentleman's."

"His voice is well modulated, I admit," was my reply. "But I miss the drawl which is said to be conventional in the upper circles of English society."

"Oh! it's only the fops that have that," quickly interposed my cousin.

"Possibly. But to go back to his knowledge of the nobility. He has only to study Burke's Peerage, of which even you have a copy."

Georgiana was quite indignant. She still insisted, however, that I should continue to play propriety for her, by being in the drawing-room, in the mornings, while she flirted with her admirer; and as the bathing hour had arrived, and everybody was going to the beach, she gave a last look in the mirror at her becoming morning dress, for this conversation happened in her room. Then she lounged down stairs, book in hand.

I was provoked, for I wished to look at the

bathers, especially as Rosalie was to go in, with her nurse. I felt my indignation increase, while I listened to the fulsome compliments which her admirer paid to my cousin, particularly when he said that she reminded him of the Lady Clementina Villiers, with whom he had danced at Almack's the preceding winter. I sat nervously knitting my purse, eager to speak my mind; and at last an opportunity offered. The talk fell on manner, which the gentleman pronounced an infallible test of high breeding, "and which," he said, with a bow, "you have in perfection, Miss Elliott."

Georgiana blushed, simpered, and to cover her confusion, turned her fan toward me, saying, "My cousin, here, goes so far as to assert that one can tell, by the accent, what particular nation and province a stranger belongs to."

Her admirer could do nothing less, at this, than turn toward me. He had seen me, I have no doubt, a score of times; but had never condescended to be aware, by any visible sign, that I existed. Now, however, he smiled blandly, saying,

"Ah! Miss, I fear you are a critic. But let us put your penetration to a test. Come now: in what part of England was I born?"

There was a latent sneer under his assumption of deference and admiration; and I answered bluntly,

"Indeed, sir, you are a sphinx. You don't talk like a cockney, for instance. And it can't be said of you, as a pert Oxonian wrote back to his college, the day after he had dined at a great London nabob's, 'we had all the delicacies of the season at table, except the letter *h*.' Nor have you the silly drawl which I've been told the upper classes have affected till it has grown to be a second habit. Nor the Yorkshire accent, for Mr. Elliott's coachman is a Yorkshireman; and he doesn't pronounce as you do. I heard a Gloucestershire man, only the other day; and you're not a Gloucestershire man. In fact," said I, looking at him with a sudden suspicion, called up by this discussion, "you talk precisely like any ordinary New Yorker."

To my surprise, he shot a quick look of inquiry at me, and colored in embarrassment. But it was only for a moment. He forced a laugh and answered gayly,

"Well done. You literary ladies, after all, beat our sex in the delicacy of your compliments. To be an educated American and an educated Englishman, Miss Elliott," he said, bowing to Georgiana, "is to be precisely the same thing."

By one of those strange instincts, which we

sometimes experience, I felt, at that moment, that a third party was listening to this episode. I glanced aside, and sure enough, in a deep arm-chair, half concealed by the lace curtains of the window, there sat a gentleman, who, though apparently absorbed in a book before him, wore such a quiet, significant smile on his face, that I knew he had overheard us. I was annoyed, for I had a suspicion he was silently laughing at the warmth of my retort. Just then he rose from his seat, and his eyes, as he turned away, rested on me for an instant. I felt the blood rush to my brow. He evidently saw my mortification, for he looked immediately toward Georgiana and her admirer; and the latter, now first observing him, turned white as ashes.

Somehow, for the rest of that day, I could not get this stranger out of my mind. I had seen him only for a second; but I knew his every feature, and the air with which he carried himself. A massive head, eagle eyes, a mouth firm as a martyr's, a lofty manner, a powerful frame: intellect, strength and manliness; these were the qualities he impressed me as possessing beyond any other man I had ever seen.

CHAPTER IV.

THAT night there was a "hop." Strange to say, for the first time in my life, I was fastidious about my dress. But as I had only a white muslin and blue barege, to choose from, I was not long in coming to a decision. I selected the former. My hair was dressed *a la Grecque*. Before going down stairs, I went into my cousin's room, to see if I could assist her. She was in high good-humor, having on a new and beautifully fitting dress; and looked at me in unaffected surprise.

"Why, Maggy," she cried, "you are really charming. You always dress so old-maidish, that one doesn't know how pretty you grow. There, child, I declare, I've brought quite a color to your cheeks. Isn't she improved, ma?"

My aunt, stiff in *moire antique*, was drawing her gloves on her fat, pudgy hands. She glanced at me and replied,

"Your cousin will always be odd, Georgy. See how she has dressed her hair."

I knew, from the tone, that my aunt was displeased; perhaps thought my coiffure pretentious; and the pleasure of the evening was spoilt.

Nobody spoke to me for a long while. I sat on a chair, in one corner, and watched the matrons gossiping in groups, and their daughters whirling around in the waltz; all seemed enjoying themselves: I only was unhappy. After

awhile, an elderly, single lady came up, who lived on gossip.

"I don't see Miss Elliott's English beau," she said. "Somebody told me, too, he left this afternoon. Do you know anything about it?"

I had not heard of his departure, and was surprised; for he had expected to remain several weeks longer. But I was so indignant at this impertinent attempt to elicit information regarding Georgiana's affairs, that I suppressed my curiosity to learn what my companion knew, changed the conversation, and directly after rose and left her.

The atmosphere, in the drawing-room, was so heated, that I passed out into the piazza, which running the whole length of the hotel, was used for a public promenade, especially on evenings. It was now almost as crowded as the drawing-room, for a waltz had just been finished, and the dancers were parading, two and two, up and down, gayly chatting and laughing. Having no one to walk with, I stopped at a chair near one of the windows, so that I could look in. I had scarcely taken my seat, when I saw the gentleman, who had overheard our conversation in the morning, cross the room to speak to an acquaintance, who was concealed behind the curtains of the window, outside of which I sat. After mutual expressions of delight and surprise, at meeting each other unexpectedly at this place, the latter said,

"There are some pretty girls here, Talbot. Are you dancing?"

"Dancing," answered my silent critic of the morning, "isn't much in my line; and besides I know nobody as yet."

"Precisely my case. I ran down here, for a day or two, merely because it was near. Generally I go to Newport, as you do. But I understand Gov. Bright, Senator Clare, Col. Howard, and others whom we know are here; and they'll introduce us."

"To tell the truth," replied he, who had been called Talbot, "I don't see any faces here that interest me, except one."

"Who is she?"

"Who she is I can't say. A governess, I believe. But what she is, you can judge for yourself. She is sitting yonder, in that corner. No," he added, in a still lower tone, as he glanced across the room, "she has disappeared."

I was within two feet of the speaker, separated from him only by the wall, and heard every word distinctly. My first impulse was to rise. But to have done this would have attracted his attention. I was compelled, therefore, to remain, though my cheeks tingled.

"She must be beautiful then," laughed his friend, "if, being only a governess, she has attracted you."

"Not what a fashionable woman would call beautiful; but something more original," was the reply. "She is dressed in a simple white robe, with wavy brown hair worn in ringlets from the back of her head; a tall, stately girl, with great, luminous eyes, and a brilliant complexion: a sort of high-souled Diana stepped down from a pedestal."

I was dizzy with a strange delight. I had not only never heard myself called beautiful before, but had never supposed that I was beautiful.

"You are enthusiastic," replied Mr. Talbot's friend, in a tone, half banter, half surprise. "I must see this paragon."

"She's clever, too; clever in the English sense," continued Mr. Talbot. "Whom do you think I found here, when I arrived this morning? That fellow you defended, when I was opposed to you last."

"Not Despencer?"

"Yes! and passing himself off for an Englishman. I happened to overhear him flirting with a stylish-looking heiress, the daughter, I suspect, of the people who employ this governess. He was romancing grandly about my lord this and my lady that, and doing it, I assure you, in a way to impose on nine out of ten, when this young lady, who sat there quietly knitting, but dreadfully annoyed, as I could see, happened to be appealed to." And he briefly narrated what I have already told. "When she had done," he said, "the fellow looked as crest-fallen as he did in the dock. He evidently thought she had heard about him. He caught my eye, afterward; recognized me; and has disappeared, I've no doubt, for I don't see him here to-night. You know he's a coward."

"Cursing you heartily," laughed the other, "for having prevented his trapping an heiress."

"Precisely. But he'd have been found out, even if I hadn't come. This Diana of mine would have seen through him before long. If she has culture, as well as intellect and beauty, what a woman she must be!"

"How old is she?"

"That's the most curious part of all. Apparently about eighteen. Governesses, you know, are generally old and ugly."

"How do you know she's a governess?"

"I heard one of these old tabby-cats say to her daughter, a bony, sharp-nosed caricature of herself, 'see what a ridiculous way that girl, the Elliotts' governess, has her hair dressed in.' The heiress, I believe, is a Miss Elliott."

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Fortunately, at this juncture, a crowd of young people, came galloping down the piazza, and availing myself of the noise, I escaped, undetected.

Up to that hour of my life, I had said and believed that a woman ought to be more gratified by praise of her intellect than of her person. I now knew better. For the sweetest words I had ever heard were Mr. Talbot's declaration that I was beautiful. A tumult of strange, but happy feelings possessed me; I could not remain among the crowd; I stole away to my favorite arbor, at the foot of the lawn, overlooking the sea. There I sat, for quite an hour, in a dreamy, delicious revery, only mechanically hearing the surf breaking on the beach beneath me, and the music of the dancers fitfully rising and falling on the land wind.

When I stole back to the drawing-room, I could not, at first, lift my eyes, and my heart fluttered nervously. But the one I dreaded, yet wished to see, was not there, nor did he reappear for the rest of the evening.

The next morning, Georgiana was out of humor: I suppose at the absence of her admirer. I deferred telling her, therefore, as I had intended, what I had overheard about him. I took a long walk on the beach with Rosalie and her nurse, and when the bathing hour arrived, told my pet I would watch her from the bank, as I did not wish, myself, to go in, that day. I was leaving the hotel, for this purpose, when my steps were arrested, in the doorway, by the crowd of laughing and talking young girls and their admirers, who blocked it up for the moment. All at once I observed that Mr. Talbot was near me. One of the young men, who had, I suppose, picked up an acquaintance with him, asked him if he was going to bathe, and on his replying in the negative, the other added, familiarly.

"Not used to it, eh? Or a little afraid? It's rough, to-day, and will take a good bather."

A quiet smile of contempt was the only answer to this ill-bred speech; then the crowd opened, and I pushed through.

The crowd flocked after me. Ladies in wrappers; gentlemen in bathing hats; nurses carrying children in long flannel night-gowns; a grotesque medley; but every one in high good-humor. A group near me was talking of Mr. Talbot's refusal.

"Afraid, that's it," said his interlocutor. "One of your solemn prigs. Shouldn't wonder if he was a parson on a ticket of leave."

At this coarse sally there was a laugh from one or two silly girls. But here another gentleman interposed.

"He's not a parson, I'll bet on that; for he looked into the billiard-room, last night, when I was there; and I asked him to play, for all you fellows were dancing and I was deuced hard run——"

"And he played?"

"Yes! and beat me. Beat me easy. He's somebody, let me tell you; for Senator Clare and the governor both came in, staid till the game was over, and then took him away with them to talk. They wouldn't do that with any of us. I saw them, an hour after, sitting together in the shadow of the pinzza. You'd better not be quite so free-and-easy with him, Jones."

"Who can he be?" cried the young ladies.
"Has any one heard his name?"

It is an animated and often amusing sight, when fifty or a hundred persons, of all ages and in every variety of dress, are sporting in the surf: the young shouting with fun and excitement, while the old gravely go through with the bath as if it was the most serious affair in life. One cannot, at first, recognize one's most intimate acquaintances. The tall, willowy belle of the drawing-room has lost the cloud-like amplitude of lace and muslin, which distinguished her the night before, and is converted into a walking mummy, in red and blue woolen Bloomers; an oil-skin cap on her head, no shoes to her feet, her thin person at the mercy of the breeze. The stately dame, lately compressed into that "love of a basque," is revealed in all her huge proportions, and wallows over the sand, toward the surf, in her yellow-brown bathing-dress, quivering all over like calves-foot jelly. Then the cunning look of the babies!

I had taken a book with me, and after watching the scene awhile, began to read, occasionally looking up to see how Rosalie enjoyed the bath. The little thing was in high glee, and far out among the breakers: where, catching sight of me, she clapped her tiny hands and laughed. I smiled back, and wished, for the moment, I had bathed too; for the waves came rolling in quick and crisp, and everybody was wild with delight. To shut out the temptation I turned again to my book.

Suddenly there was a startling cry. I looked up. The bathers were hurrying in shore: the women screaming; the men pale, but silent. With an instinctive fear I searched the crowd for Rosalie and her nurse. They were not to be seen. But I beheld, beyond the breakers, a woman's form, sinking and struggling; I caught the gleam of a child's golden hair; and I heard the cry, "they are drowning," repeated by half

a score of voices, all in one breath. Yet though there were twenty men among the bathers, all were hastening in shore, the boastful Jones leading the terrified pack, and actually treading down helpless females in his way.

I sprang to my feet, and with a wild cry was rushing to the bank, when a strong arm restrained me. It was that of Mr. Talbot.

At any other time his presence would have embarrassed me, but now I thought only of Rosalie.

"Oh! save her," I cried, clasping my hands, "save her!"

He seemed to comprehend everything at once. Throwing off his coat, he leaped down the bank, ran swiftly across the beach, denuding himself of cravat and vest as he went; stopped an instant, on the edge of the surf, to remove his shoes: and plunged in. The next moment he was far out among the breakers.

I watched him breathlessly. He reached the nurse just as she was going down for the last time, caught her, and turned to come in. But at that instant, an enormous billow swept over them; and the whole three went under.

Twenty voices were speaking at once. I heard every one of them, and recognized most of the speakers, though I never took my eyes from the breakers. The nurse was being censured by all. She had been warned, one said, not to go out so far, but had disregarded everybody, and had finally got into a hole, and lost her footing, and with it her presence of mind. A current, which ran just outside the breakers, another added, had swept her, in a moment after, far beyond her depth. Mr. Talbot, one of the gentlemen said, was in this current now, and would never get out of it alive, "for I saw the nurse," he continued, "catch him about the neck as he went down." A by-stander suggested that if a boat could be launched, something might yet be done. But a dozen voices answered that there were no fishermen about, and that nobody else could steer a boat through the surf: besides, the nearest boat was three hundred yards off. The attempt to save the nurse and child, another declared, had been madness from the first. It was the craven Jones, that spoke, for I recognized his voice.

Hours seemed to elapse while these things were being said. But the drowning persons did not reappear. The great wave, which had carried them under, rushed shorewards, and spent itself at the very feet of the fugitives. Another, and another came racing in. Suddenly, in a trough of the sea, far out, I saw an arm dashed upwards; it held aloft a child's form, which I recognized as Rosalie's; and it was followed imme-

diately by Mr. Talbot. His face was full of stern resolution; but he seemed quite exhausted; and he turned eagerly to note how far he was from the shore.

My heart beat wild and fast. Oh! would no one go to their aid? Could he make any headway? Yes! he did. He struck boldly out; he rode that incoming wave triumphantly; he was already twenty feet nearer to the beach.

Alas! for human hope. At that moment, I saw three or four gigantic rollers rushing after him,

their lofty fronts towering higher and higher as they approached. The foremost was close upon him. It paused ominously, piling itself up and up, away into the sky. Suddenly, a streak of foam shot along its crest; a sound like thunder followed, as the tons of water descended; and the brave face disappeared, and with it Rosalie. The succeeding waves rolled swiftly in, and broke over the boiling gulf; and everything swam around me.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE OLD STONE MANSION.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON, AUTHOR OF "THE VALLEY FARM," "MABEL," "KATE AYLESFORD," &c.

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CHAPTER V.

By this time a hundred people had collected on the beach, the hotel emptying itself as if by magic. Suddenly there was a shout, accompanied by a name passed from mouth to mouth. I looked around. Five or six fishermen, who had chanced to be in the bar-room, had come running to the scene. At their head was one famous for having rescued, the preceding winter, more than a hundred persons from a single wreck. The ship had gone ashore, at nightfall, during a violent snow-storm; and before morning dawned, half of her human freight had perished. When the cold, misty day broke, the people on shore first became aware of her exact position, though they had heard, all night, guns firing, and, they thought, shrieks and cries for help, in the pauses of the gale. At first no one would venture out, for the surf was mountain high. At last the fisherman I have spoken of came up, and offered to go, if a boat's crew would volunteer. His reputation for daring and skill was such that half a dozen men stepped forward immediately. Three times they attempted, in vain, to launch through the breakers. The fourth effort was successful, but the boat stood, for a moment, almost perpendicular, before the stout arms within it got the mastery. I remember how my heart swelled, and the tears rushed to my eyes, when I was told of this heroic act. "And had he no family," I said, "the thought of whom deterred him?" "It was that, on the contrary, which influenced him most," was the reply. "He said that when a man saw women and children drowning before his eyes, it made him think how he would feel if his own little ones were wrecked."

He had dashed into the surf, before I saw him, and now stood, looking back for an instant, telling his companions to join hands with him and form a line. The red shirt he wore was open at the throat, revealing a chest like that of the Farnese Hercules; his face was the color of bronze; his dark hair was blown about by the wind: I shall never, to my dying hour, forget that picture, as it stood out, in bold relief,
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against the green back-ground of the sea. His look of high courage, his vast physical strength, the halo of his past deeds, restored me back to hope.

I saw all this in a single moment. Then my eyes sought again the spot where Rosalie had disappeared. Was that her rescuer? Yes, thank God! And others saw him also, for shouts arose on every hand, "there they are," "how bravely he swims," "they are saved, they are saved." What followed, seems to me, even yet, like a wild dream. I saw the line of fishermen extending out into the breakers, their leader standing at their head, like a rock, while the waves rushed over him; I saw the swimmer swept in with the velocity of lightning; I saw that he carried a child; and I was in the surf, waist deep, before I knew it, laughing and crying hysterically; and then I held Rosalie in my arms, the first to receive her, and was assisted, almost carried to shore, by one of the fishermen.

They told me afterward that the nurse was quite insensible when they dragged her in; and that Mr. Talbot said that it was the desperation with which she clung to him, that had pulled him under and kept him there. "Had I not shaken her off," he added, "the whole three of us would have perished." Fortunately for her, a huge roller had flung her within reach of the fishermen, just after the other two were saved.

We were in too excited a state to make our appearance again that day. Even Georgiana forgot her flirtations, excused herself from a drive, and sat, with her mother and myself, in Rosalie's room. Mr. Elliott had gone to the city, but when he returned, at night, he hurried up to us, pale and breathless, and remained, for the whole evening, holding his child's hand and tenderly regarding her.

The next morning I was the first of our party down; and was beset by inquiries. Before I could extricate myself, I saw a now well known form come in. Mr. Talbot, for it was his, recognized me quite across the room; our eyes met; and he was approaching to speak, when my uncle, entering, stopped him. I thought I

detected annoyance in Mr. Talbot's face, at my uncle's pompous gratitude; certainly his look brightened up wonderfully when the set speech was over.

The breakfast bell had now sounded, and the crowd was moving toward the dining-room, bearing me with it. Mr. Talbot and I were thrown together, for an instant, at the door. He held out his hand, as if he had known me for years, asking after Rosalie. I told him that she was as well as ever now, and added how much we all thanked him for what he had done. He smiled in reply, saying he had only performed a duty, and then we parted to go to our different seats; but there was something in the smile, which kept me, during all that meal, in a flutter of strange happiness.

I was in Georgiana's room, just before dinner, assisting my cousin to complete her toilet, and my aunt was looking magisterially on, when there was a knock at the door, and my uncle entered, redder than ever in the face and puffing with the labor of coming up stairs. He plunged down on the frail bedstead, all the chairs being occupied, till it creaked under him, exclaiming, as he mopped his brow,

"I've got news for you, Georgy. Who do you think this Mr. Talbot is?"

"I'm sure I don't know, papa. But he's handsome; and a hero: how lovely he'd look in uniform."

I bit my lip to conceal a smile. My uncle went on.

"Pooh! pooh! All stuff about hero and regiments. He's *the* Mr. Talbot, the famous Mr. Talbot, the ablest lawyer of his years in his city, as Senator Clare has just told me." And the handkerchief was used, this time, to fan his face. "I thought I recognized him. When I was over there, two years ago, I heard him at a public meeting; it was about the Hungarians; Kossuth, you know, was expected then; and he actually made me cry."

"Made *you* cry?" said Georgiana, opening her Juno-like eyes, and laughing a light laugh of incredulity.

"Yes! Nor was I the only one. You needn't shake your head, you puss. Do you think we old fellows have no feelings?"

The only reply was a shrug of the pretty shoulders, which were unusually bare to-day. For some reason, indeed, my cousin had taken great pains with her toilet. My uncle paused, as if half ashamed of his confession, and then went on.

"But this gentleman is rich too, very rich; needn't practice if he didn't want to. I tell you

what, Georgy," and he looked at her seriously, "you'd better give up flirting and set your cap for him."

"I intend to," said my cousin, gayly, rising as she spoke, "and I'll bet you, pa, that I succeed." She tapped his cheek with her fan. "Is it done?"

"The day you are Mrs. Talbot," was the reply, "I'll give you ten thousand dollars in diamonds."

"Will you, you precious old papa?" cried Georgiana, and she fairly took his head in her hands and kissed him, a feat I had not seen her perform, in full dress, for years.

CHAPTER VI.

GEORGIANA carried out her threat. It gave me a new idea of her intellect, if I may call it such, to see the tact with which she adapted herself to Mr. Talbot's tastes. Their intimacy progressed rapidly. Though he was a hero in the eyes of all the young ladies, and, therefore, welcomed by each with smiles, she seemed, by some art known only to herself, to be able to while him away at will. I believe they began, at last, to hate her. I own to having, more than once, been secretly annoyed at the successful *nonchalance* with which she would approach, when Mr. Talbot was conversing with me, make some gay remark, and finally carry him off triumphantly. There is a manner acquired by persons who live much in society, which is often more serviceable than higher mental qualities. This Georgiana possessed in perfection. Her taste in dress also was exquisite, and her means of gratifying it unlimited.

"Your cousin always looks like a picture," he said to me, one evening, as Georgiana floated into the drawing-room, her light, voluminous robes falling cloud-like about her. "She has the rare gift of knowing precisely what will become her; and in that respect is a true artist."

At other times he would praise what he called her feminine nature. "She seems to love all things that are beautiful," he once said. "It is, as developed in her, a purely feminine characteristic. I often think, that, to the extent to which a woman has it, is she truly womanly. Men, instinctively, seek turmoil and strife; they delight in something to conquer; and the best of them, I believe, prefer those women who are most entirely their opposites."

One morning, Georgiana appeared with her hair brushed back from her face, and wearing a light colored robe, that opened in front, displaying a superbly embroidered skirt: the robe was

trimmed with cherry-colored ribbons, and became her magically.

"She looks like a French Marquise of the last century," said Mr. Talbot. "What a high-bred air! One would think she had walked out of a picture by 'Greuze.' I must go and talk to her, and fancy I am in the Little Trianon, in the first years of Marie Antoinette."

These conversations always left a pang behind them. In vain I chided myself, in secret; in vain I said I was envious: I could not prevent a feeling of pain whenever Mr. Talbot thus eulogized Georgiana. I, who knew her so well, could not understand the glamour which she seemed to have cast over him.

Yet there were occasions when I doubted if Mr. Talbot cared for her. I could not forget what I had overheard him say about myself. And his manner to me, though not the least like that of lovers I had read of, was such as often to set my heart beating. It was different, at all times, from what it was to Georgiana. It had a high and knightly bearing, an under-current of acknowledged sympathy, which I never observed in his manner to her. To my cousin he talked of fashion, the topics of society, European travel, the opera, the Springs: with me his themes were of a loftier character; and I could not but be flattered by the distinction. Art, literature, social progress, heroic souls, deeds that would live forever: these were the subjects we discussed. Ah! how his eye kindled, how his voice deepened with enthusiasm, as he spoke of the great dead; men, who had lived, not for their own selfish aggrandizement, but for the good of mankind; martyrs and patriots, who, in the cause of country or of God, had taken their lives in their hands, and gone forth to do battle with the Appolyn of their age. It was at such times, that, looking at the rigid mouth, and eye that challenged defiance, I felt that he also could die for what he thought the right, yes! could pluck his own heart out, if need be.

But I was not foolish enough to think he loved me. Whenever an hour had been spent with him peculiarly agreeable, or whenever he seemed to prefer my society to Georgiana's, I used to say to myself, when I was alone in my room: "Margaret Gray, don't be silly; gentlemen, even the best of them, like to amuse themselves with girls: you must not suppose, because Mr. Talbot talks to you, that he forgets you are poor."

Yet, as soon as we met again, I ceased to remember this. I learned to detect his footsteps, before he was in sight; to know him, by his gait, when he was so far off that I could hardly distinguish him. Once or twice he had joined me,

in the customary ramble, which I took, at sunset, up the bench; and on these occasions he was always strangely eloquent. He seemed to give himself up to the hour and to his company, talking as if I and Nature were parts of himself. This was a silent recognition, I said to myself, that I was worthy to share his higher thoughts. And then I chided myself for saying so.

On another occasion, we sat watching the moonlight on the sea, till, in listening to his talk, I forgot the time, and was surprised and a little abashed, when Georgiana came in search of me at a late hour.

"Dear me," she said, with an affectation of surprise, "you here, Maggy. I hadn't the least notion of it, and ran down, tired out with the silly fops in the drawing-room, to look at the ocean." But I knew better; I knew she had come to watch me.

Meantime a fortnight passed. There were daily rides, or sailing excursions, or parties to go crabbing; mornings spent in the bowling alleys, evenings devoted to dances or charades. In one respect, our acquaintance with Mr. Talbot had been of advantage to me, it procured me a share in these pleasures. Before his arrival, everybody considered me a governess, and as my uncle never asked me to participate in the sports constantly going on, nobody else thought it worth while. But now the fact that Mr. Talbot often invited me, and the knowledge that I was not a hired dependent, procured me, almost always, a share in such amusements. I frequently heard, "Is not Miss Gray going?" or "We can't do without Miss Gray," or "Miss Gray must come on our side, or the game won't be fair." I was quite a different person from the plain, neglected automaten of the month before.

One day there was a crabbing party at Point Breeze, a shady promontory on the Chincoree river, within a convenient drive of the hotel. It was a sultry morning, for a land breeze was blowing, and we had all repaired there, because, at such times it was hottest at the beach, but was comparatively cool at the Point, there being a long stretch of river and bay to the westward, which impregnated the wind with something of its own refreshing temperature.

Georgiana, too fine a lady to join in our sport, was sitting under an awning, fanning herself languidly, when Mr. Talbot looked up from his line.

"What do you say to a sail, Miss Elliott?" he said. "You seem dreadfully bored. Come, I will be your cavalier; a modern Cavendish, if you will; and we'll go in search of new El Dorados."

Georgiana glanced around, with secret triumph in her eye; but affecting hesitation, said,

"If you don't think it will be too hot?"

"Nonsense," replied Mr. Talbot, in a blunt decided way, he often had; and throwing down his line, he continued, "your parasol will keep off the sun; and it's cooler on the water than here."

"Well, if Margaret will come also," said my cousin, rising gracefully, for she never forgo the proprieties.

I was not particularly pleased at a second hand invitation like this, especially as Mr. Talbot remarked, quite coolly, "Oh! to be sure," as he jumped from the pier to hoist the sail of the boat; but I knew Georgiana would pout after we got home, if I did not go, so I consented with the best grace I could.

There was a light breeze, which wafted us slowly out into the bay. I have always been fond of the water, so I soon forgot my momentary vexation. Mr. Talbot had the reputation, not only among the amateurs, but with the fishermen also, of handling a sail-boat skillfully; and certainly nothing seemed to be easier for him than to direct our light craft, as he sat, rudder in hand, carelessly chatting with Georgiana. Annoyed at the manner of my invitation, I held myself aloof, as much as possible, especially as neither of my companions appeared to notice my reserve; so I sat humming a low tune to avoid overhearing the half whispered conversation back of me, now watching the white, fleecy clouds that hung about the western horizon, and now dipping my fingers into the wave, as the boat glided noiselessly along like a white gull skimming the waters.

We had gone about six miles down the bay, and were approaching the Highlands at its mouth, when I woke from a long reverie to hear Mr. Talbot say to Georgiana that a thunder-storm was coming up and that we had better return. Glancing to the west, I saw that the fleecy clouds had disappeared, and that a purple black bank of vapor, like a distant mountain range, had taken their place. My cousin was already uneasy.

"There's nothing to be alarmed about, Miss Elliott," said Mr. Talbot, as he turned the boat homeward. "We have ample time. It will be an adventure to talk of."

Our progress was now comparatively slow. Instead of slipping smoothly along before the wind, we had to describe a zig-zag course, tacking continually as it is called, in order to beat back to the pier. But the motion, to me at least, was more exhilarating than it had been before.

Now the boat rushed along, leaning far over to the left, the water shooting past her like fence post a railroad train. Now she seemed to stop in mid-career, obedient to the guidance of Mr. Talbot, and fluttering her sails for an instant poised like a bird about to wheel, and then darted off at a sharp angle to her former course dashing into the head-waves with a thud that sent the spray often back to our faces. The blood danced riotously in my veins. I realized what Byron felt when he spoke of the sea bounding beneath him like a steed that knew its rider. I was in no hurry to be ashore.

Not so Georgiana. The constant stooping to avoid the boom, as the sail was shifted, and the changing her seat each time to get on the higher side of the boat, for she was afraid to remain on the lower, made her, at last, exclaim,

"Why don't you go back like you came, Mr. Talbot? It's much more comfortable, I'm sure. You lose a great deal, too, by crossing from side to side of the bay, in this way."

"Ah! I see you're no seaman," replied Mr. Talbot, with a smile. "Going down, we had the wind after us, and could carry what sailors call 'a free sheet.' But now what little breeze there is, is nearly dead ahead, and our only chance is to work back, as I am doing. It's very slow," he added, dubiously, glancing at the threatening clouds to the west, now rapidly rising to the zenith.

"You don't think we'll be caught out in the rain?" said Georgiana, in alarm.

"You're not much afraid of a wetting, are you?" he answered, gayly.

"We shall be drowned, I know we shall," almost shrieked my cousin, looking from Mr. Talbot to the approaching storm, and she rose quickly.

"Sit down, I beg of you," said Mr. Talbot, half authoritatively. "You might upset this light craft." And he added, in a soothing tone, "Indeed, there isn't a particle of danger. Is there, Miss Gray?"

This was the first time, since we embarked, that he had spoken directly to me. The alarm of my cousin had made me, for a second, a little nervous; but this now all passed away; for I saw Mr. Talbot felt perfectly secure, and I knew we could trust in him.

"I feel no fear," I answered. "Georgy isn't used to sailing, or she wouldn't mind it either."

For some time, nothing more was said. Mr. Talbot was busied in working his way along, taking advantage of every puff of air, of every current, and had no leisure to talk. My cousin cowered on her seat, her head buried in her

hands, or glanced up fearfully at the clouds, and then at the long stretch of water which still separated us from the pier. I watched the approaching tempest.

I wish I could describe the spectacle. Never before had I seen such a deep purple-black in the sky, or such inky water. An ominous twilight was all around. The birds, after skimming low down, had fled frightened to their hiding-places. The wind had finally died out. Above, wild, dusky-brown clouds, rolling over and over, sped before the tempest. A foreboding hush was on everything. Suddenly, far to the west, I saw the water begin to glisten; the black sky lifted just enough to show a narrow streak of light along the horizon; and a strange, unearthly sound pervaded space, as of Nature sobbing at her approaching dissolution.

"Miss Gray," said Mr. Talbot, in quick, almost stern tones. "Here."

I was at his side in a moment.

"The squall," he said, rapidly, "will strike us directly: you can see and hear it coming. Take this tiller. I must get in the mainsail, or we shall capsize," he continued, running forward. There was a little shriek from Georgiana, but he took no notice of it. "Listen to what I say. When I cry 'luff,' put your helm over to the left; that is the way. Perhaps there'll be no necessity, but if the squall comes before I get back, it's the only thing that will save us. If I say, afterward, 'down, hard down,' jam the tiller down with all your might."

He stood at the foot of the mast, as he spoke, and was already untying the ropes, which held the huge sail up. I could, at that moment, have braved anything.

Down came the mainsail, clattering, Mr. Talbot pulling it in, hand over hand. A few quick, decisive knots tied it fast to the boom. The squall was now close to us, whitening the wide bay before it, roaring like the surf at high-tide in a north-easter. Mr. Talbot did not hesitate an instant, but springing to the bow of the boat, began to let down the triangular sail, which ran from the bowsprit to the top of the mast. The canvas had half descended, and he was stooping to fasten it, when he thundered, rather than shouted, "luff, luff," and then "down, hard down, harder." The boat heeled over till I thought it had upset: described a quick curve in the water; and then danced up into the very teeth of the hurricane, her bow, as it plunged into the waves, throwing the spray almost over the mast-head, and completely drenching me. For a second, and while I thought we were going over, I saw the sail nearly dragged, as I thought,

out of Mr. Talbot's hands; but he pulled it down, with the strength of a Hercules, and by a rapid, dexterous turn fastened the rope to the side of the mast: all this time his eyes never leaving me and Georgiana.

"Thank God!" he said, almost under his breath, and unconsciously, I believe. His face, lately so troubled, cleared up magically, and glancing for a moment ahead, he came back to where we sat, saying cheerfully, "Now it may blow great guns, Miss Elliott, it can't harm us: what prodigies we shall be in the eyes of everybody; we have really had an adventure. Keep the tiller a little while longer, Miss Margaret, while I improvise a shelter from the storm for your cousin."

It was quite time, for the rain, at first descending in a few huge drops, was now pouring in a torrent, almost beating me down. Georgiana, in a minute, was housed under the sail; but by that time I was drenched through. Mr. Talbot, though in no better condition, shook his head as he saw it, and taking the tiller from me, whispered,

"You're a brave girl, Miss Gray. But go now and get under the sail too, for you're not used to this sort of work. Oh! never mind me," he added, interpreting my glance. "Such an old water-dog as I am is all the better for a drenching occasionally. The squall is past, and I'll soon carry you into port."

CHAPTER VII.

From that day, there was a perceptible change in Mr. Talbot's manner toward me. I did not go to the dinner table, but obeyed his parting injunction, to take a hot drink he said he would send up, and to lie down till evening. He came up, at supper, extending both hands, in a frank, unconventional way he had when pleased.

"How glad I am to see you. What a color you have. I hope you've taken no cold."

"None at all," I said, gayly. "Nor has Georgiana either."

"You relieve me," he replied. "I was almost afraid to ask. Do you know," he added, offering me his arm, "that, for a moment, I thought it was all over. If it hadn't been for your ready apprehension of my orders, and your quick obedience, the boat would have been upset."

"And one, or all of us, been drowned," I replied: and I shuddered slightly.

"You have never been so near death before?" he asked. "Did you realize it?"

"Yes! I saw from your face how it was!"

"And wasn't you afraid?"

"There wasn't time."

"You had to act, you mean. Nobly said. Do you know, Miss Margaret, that I believe you'd have made a Joan of Arc?"

At this moment, my aunt came up, and began alternately to chide my companion for having taken Georgiana sailing, and to thank him "for saving," as she phrased it, "the dear girl's life."

"I'll take the blame," gallantly said Mr. Talbot, "for I deserve it. But the praise belongs to Miss Margaret, who saved all of our lives." And he withdrew a step, so as to put me into the foreground.

My aunt looked at me, at first in amazement, then with indignation, which she tried, however, to conceal from my companion.

"Oh! to be sure. I'd heard of it," and she laughed a little constrained laugh. "We're all obliged to my husband's niece. She's quite masculine, always was," and with this homethrust, she left us.

Georgiana did not make her appearance till the next day; but Mr. Talbot was the first to welcome her; he even attended her to breakfast, taking my uncle's vacant seat; for Mr. Elliott had gone to town.

Still, though in this, and other things, he was as attentive as ever to my cousin, I could see, after a day or two, that she was jealous of me. At first, the possibility of such a thing seemed incredible. But when she grew, daily, more cold toward me; when she treated me often superciliously, even pettishly, I could no longer doubt it. My aunt took even less pains to conceal her indignation. All this could not but render me unhappy. Yet, when Mr. Talbot was at my side, I forgot everything. Not unfrequently, also, the jealousy of my cousin sent a thrill of joy through me, because it confirmed me in what, at other times, I still thought a vain delusion—the hope that I was not indifferent to Mr. Talbot.

One night, there was a subscription ball, given by the gentlemen of our hotel. It had kept the ladies in a state of excitement for a whole week preceding; hair-dressers had been sent for from the city; new wardrobes had been ordered; several army and navy officers, with various other guests, distinguished either socially or politically, were expected. More than half the girls were speculating as to the conquests they would make.

I wore my simple robe of muslin; and my hair *a la Grecque*. I will not deny that I thought of Mr. Talbot, and of what I had overheard him say about this costume, on that first evening. Georgiana was to appear in a new and costly

dress, which she had sent for from her milliner. I saw, from her eye, that she had determined to stake everything on that night's success. Never shall I forget the look of contempt that welcomed me, for a moment, as I entered her room, preparatory to going down.

Mr. Talbot, in spite of the crowd of uniforms, was still the most popular person there. My heart fluttered when I saw him approach where Georgiana and I were sitting. There was a moment of doubt, during which he paid his compliments to both of us; then he asked me to dance the first set with him. I really pitied my cousin, till I saw the angry flush on her face, as I turned to go, and the threatening look of her eyes.

But I soon forgot everything but my partner. There was a subdued manner about him, different from what I had ever observed toward other women, which made me feel at once happy and embarrassed. Perhaps he observed my nervousness, for he suddenly became lively; never had I known him more entertaining; and I soon grew at ease again. I felt the magnetism of his intellect; I was in extravagant spirits.

When the dance was over, a group gathered about us, and I heard more than one whisper, "Miss Gray is unusually brilliant to-night;" indeed my situation became so public, that I drew my companion out to the piazza, under pretence of wanting fresh air. "I shall never," I thought, "become habituated enough to society to endure being stared at."

All through that evening, I saw my aunt watching me with an angry scowl. But I was too happy to think of this except for the moment. Twice, Mr. Talbot danced with Georgiana, and several other young belles were honored, each once, with his hand; but I was the only one whom he led out frequently. It came to be so natural for me, at last, to expect his return, after a waltz or quadrille with others, that, unconsciously, I kept, whenever it was possible, a vacant seat for him beside me.

When I went to my room, that night, I felt, that, if I never was happy again, I had been so, superlatively so, for once in my life. I did not audibly even whisper it to myself, but the hope was never so strong before that I was beloved. Mr. Talbot's manner, all the evening, had been what a woman would rather have than any amount of mere intellectual admiration: and it had never been so before.

I woke, the next morning, with a heart as light as a bird. I began to sing at my simple toilet. I knew that Mr. Talbot was to rise at day-break to go fishing, and I did not expect, therefore, to see him at the breakfast-table; but

I could not avoid stealing a glance at his usual seat, and blushing, guiltily, when I caught my aunt's eye fixed severely on me.

"I wish to see you in my room," said my aunt, coldly, as we rose from the table.

I followed her up stairs. She told me to lock the door.

"A pretty state of things!" she exclaimed. "So you think you can wheedle Mr. Talbot into marrying you."

I made no reply. But I felt the blood rush to my forehead: then leave me pale as ashes, but trembling with suppressed indignation.

"As if he would ever do more than amuse himself with one like you," she continued. "Oh! you needn't look in that way. I always told Mr. Elliott you were a treacherous, ungrateful minx. I declare you make me ashamed of my sex, to see how impudently you throw yourself into this gentleman's way."

"I am not treacherous," I said, rallying to defend myself, "I am not ungrate——"

"Stop! I won't have a word. Such unblushing effrontery I never saw. You will make yourself the talk of the whole place, if you haven't already done it! If you've a right to disgrace yourself, you've no right to disgrace us. Mr. Talbot sees you are throwing yourself into his arms, and no doubt laughs about it to the other young men. The idea of going off walking, alone, up the beach, with him; of sitting out in the arbor, late at night; of following him with your eyes; of always keeping a place for him, by you, on the sofa."

At this last allusion, the color rose to my cheeks, for I felt partly guilty. She had paused for breath, but when she saw my embarrassment, she resumed,

"Oh! you admit it, do you? You're not so brazen but what you blush for it. And remember, Miss, what I see, others see. I know that your conduct was remarked on, last night. There, not a word; but go now. I want no explanations, but only more prudent behavior. Get him, if you can; I'm sure your uncle and dear Georgiana, as well as I, will rejoice at your good luck; but don't disgrace us by indelicate behavior."

I left the room abashed and humiliated. I knew well that it was envy and rage that made my aunt speak in this way. But I could not avoid fearing, for all that, that my conduct had been such as to cause remark. I felt guilty of having loved Mr. Talbot. What if I had betrayed myself, as my aunt said?

Such a possibility almost maddened me. Beyond all things else I loathed scheming in a young girl. To me it was inexpressibly un-

maidenly. To be accused of it by strangers, to have given even the faintest cause for the accusation—oh! it was degrading. I hated, for the time, Mr. Talbot; I hated my aunt for her injustice; I hated Georgiana for having been the cause of it; but I hated most myself. Bitterly I resolved that neither she, nor others, should ever have it to say again that I courted his society: and in this mood I took a book and walked angrily down to the arbor overlooking the beach.

CHAPTER VIII.

I HAD been reading for a little while only, when I heard a familiar footstep; and Mr. Talbot approached. Still smarting from what my aunt had said, and determined to afford no cause for such remarks again, I gave him a curt reception.

He seemed astonished: then offended: then appeared to think it was absurd to get angry. But having made one or two further efforts to draw me into conversation, which I answered only in monosyllables, he was about to go, when Georgiana came up. I had left her reading a sentimental novel in her room, where she declared she would stay till dinner; but I have no doubt she had seen Mr. Talbot join me, for her window overlooked the sea, and that she had come down purposely to interrupt us.

To do her justice she was looking charmingly. She pretended to explain her presence, by saying she had been searching for me all the morning; and sinking languidly into a seat, she glided into conversation with Mr. Talbot. He doubtless mentally contrasted her affability with my sullenness, for his manner changed immediately, he grew animated, he devoted himself almost entirely to her. She, on her part, played off all her pretty, coquettish arts on him. In my existing temper, I smiled, ironically, at this, behind my book. "Even the most sensible men," I said, scornfully, "are victims to vanity, and so fall a prey to these poor feminine tricks."

I was in no improved mood, therefore, to answer a question which Mr. Talbot suddenly addressed to me.

"What do you think of it, Miss Margaret?" he said. "I see you have been reading, and not listening; and I don't wonder," he continued, glancing at my book, "for 'Undino' is a story to entrance one. But pray, forget Hildebrand and his water-nymph, for awhile; and be umpire between Miss Elliott and myself."

"I haven't the first qualification for the task, sir." I answered, coldly.

But he was not to be rebuffed.

"At any rate," he said, "hear the point. Your

cousin maintains that women are not justly treated, by the laws; that, in fact, they are little better than slaves to the stronger sex."

Now this was the subject, on which, above all others, I felt most strongly: the one in which my pride and sensitiveness controlled me, perhaps, more than my intellect. I had so often contemplated the possibility of having to leave my uncle's house and earn a livelihood for myself, that I was morbidly awake to the inadequate wages which women received, to the few avenues of employment open to them, and to the loss of social caste which laboring for their bread often brought upon them. I was already angry; and this question, thus put by Mr. Talbot, made me angrier, because it implied that he palliated, if he did not defend, the course of the world at large toward my sex.

But I need not have been so. I was well aware, that, though Mr. Talbot was a firm believer in the progress of the race, and though he advocated enthusiastically every measure which he considered a reform, he was not a visionary, and that many superficial thinkers, on this account, would have called him a conservative. We had, indeed, never talked before on this theme, but I knew enough of his sentiments on social questions generally, to be aware that he was no friend to sudden and radical changes, even where they were possible, because he had no faith in their permanence under such contingencies; and I was not ignorant that he considered there were very few sudden social reforms which were practicable at all. "A reform, which is not founded on public sentiment," he had once said, "is no reform at all; for things soon fall back to their old condition; no law can last which is not an exponent of the popular prejudice as well as of the popular intellect." Earnestly as I felt on the subject of woman's wrongs, I was well aware that it was one of the most difficult social problems of the age, and that to solve it wisely would require the best thoughts of the best minds for more than one generation. I would have known, in a calmer moment, that I could not expect Mr. Talbot to take the radical view of the question, to which I, in common with others of my sex, inclined. But, in my present mood, I disregarded all this, and replied bluntly and passionately,

"Slaves! So they are." And as I spoke, the whole catalogue of woman's injuries, as dealt out to her by laws made by men, rose up before me; and my heart swelling with what I thought a righteous indignation, I continued with kindling check. "The chain may be gilded, but it is still a chain."

Georgiana's big eyes opened to their full width, less at the matter than at the manner of this speech. It shocked her conventional notions of fine ladyism. Mr. Talbot smiled, and that smile provoked me to go on, more passionately, if possible, than before.

"What equality has woman before the law?" I said. "You do not allow her to vote, yet you make her pay taxes. You tell her it is indelicate for her to preach, yet say she has a soul to be saved. You give her property, when she marries, to her husband; but don't give her his, but only a third of it, and that not till he dies. And if a woman is poor, and has to earn her living, you put her at once out of the pale of good society, and degrade her to a lower class."

"You are vehement," said Mr. Talbot, gravely, as I paused exhausted of breath. "Permit me to ask: have you considered all these things as fully as your very decided language warrants?"

The tone of superiority, in which this was spoken, provoked me still more.

"Decided language? Vehement?" I cried. "On such a subject one cannot be too vehement."

Mr. Talbot was silent. I continued heatedly, "Take the case I last spoke of. Is the world just to a woman who has to earn her livelihood?"

Still he did not reply. He was writing on the sand with the end of his light bamboo cane. I cannot describe how this simple act irritated me. I began again,

"Nor is this all. Society, that shuts the door of nearly every employment against woman, pays her inadequately even for what it allows her to do. No female earns as much as a man; she is not permitted to do it. In my city, women wait in stores, very generally; but even there they receive only half as much as young men. In your city, they are shut out even from this avenue. So it is everywhere. Yet a woman has blood and bones, must eat and dress, must have fire and light."

"A man is paid as the head of a family; a woman as a solitary individual; and the majority of men are heads of families, as the majority of women are not," said Mr. Talbot, looking up.

"Are women never heads of families? Are there no widows, with orphan children? It is the old story of the lion. Men make the laws, and make them to suit themselves. Oh! if woman could, for but one day, have control of the halls of legislation."

"Honestly now, Miss Gray," he said, and he looked me full in the eyes, "do you think the world would be the better, if women followed

trades, did merchandizing, wrangled at the bar, cheated at the stock-exchange? Isn't there something in a truly feminine character higher and diviner than can co-exist with these things?" I thought bitterly of what he had often said of Georgiana. "Suppose, for argument's sake, that the avenues to all pursuits were thrown freely open to women; that, for every purpose of money-making, the two sexes were put on an equal; that woman was made the head of the family—do you, on your honor, believe that society would be improved by it?"

I made no reply. Secretly, I felt that he was right. He waited for awhile courteously: then proceeded,

"If my mother had been hard, scheming, lucre-loving, what a wretch I would be now! And she would have been all this, I fear, Miss Gray, if she had been engaged, her life through, as men are, fighting, first for bread, and then for fortune. Under God," he continued, solemnly, his voice trembling with emotion, "it is because women are preserved, as I would say; excluded, as you phrase it; from the rougher contact of life, that we men begin, at least, with some high and holy feelings; and if we lose them afterward, or if they often grow cold within us, it is because we are thrown, like gladiators, into the arena, and forced often to fight for our very lives. By her organization, indeed, woman is more delicate, more refined, more ideal, more religious than man is; but even her organization cannot entirely resist the cold teachings of a selfish world; for few women, I say it with regret, who play the part of men, whether they play it from choice or necessity, but become more or less mannish; and to the extent they become mannish, to that extent they cease to be really lovable."

Much of this moved me. Much of it I felt to be true. But it irritated me all the more. I believed he was indirectly telling me I was too masculine. I answered,

"Is what you call womanly, really so? Haven't all men a false ideal? Wouldn't they rather have a toy than a companion?"

"No," he replied, with sudden energy, "a thousand times no! In proportion as a man is strong himself, he wishes, longs for, will have, a companion, and not a toy."

"The ivy and the oak," I answered, scornfully; "it's ivy man wants, after all."

"You don't argue, you sneer," he said.

"I do argue. I have given you examples enough."

"And your examples were all exceptions."

"Oh! that's always the answer," I said. "It

is eternally the same equivocation about exceptions to general rules."

"But society, as you surely know, has to make general laws," he said. "It flows from the fallibility of the human intellect; and under general laws it is impossible always to prevent injustice to the few. Besides, I don't see that women suffer more than men. If there are thousands of educated women, doomed to a poverty that is the more painful because of their culture, and compelled to labor at hateful tasks for a livelihood, there are quite as many men. The majority of my own sex, if I am to believe their words, are discontented with their lot. It is very certain that where one is born, as the proverb goes, 'with a silver spoon in his mouth,' a dozen are born without."

"We cannot talk on this subject," I said. "We differ too irreconcilably." And I moved to go.

"Nay! stay," said he. "Hear me out. Is it man, or woman, who is to blame for this ostracism, of which you spoke, awhile ago? Are not your sex the first to drop the acquaintance of a woman reduced to work for a livelihood?"

I acknowledged, mentally, that he was right; but remained silent. Georgiana now interposed.

"You have converted me, at least, Mr. Talbot," she said, with a wonderfully natural air of frankness and innocence. "I confess I had never thought much on this subject, but had taken up the popular cry of my sex."

"I wish you joy of your convert then, Mr. Talbot," I said, curtsying scornfully. "But it is, at least, thoroughly feminine on the part of Georgy. I suppose most of us women are so, and that is why man holds us in the slavery he does. You were right," I added, bitterly. "We betray ourselves." With which parting words, and a glance, like a Parthian arrow, shot at my cousin, I swept proudly away.

But I had not reached the house before I was heartily ashamed of myself. I had given way to temper. I had shown jealousy of Georgiana. I had exaggerated my opinions. "Vehement, was the word he used," I said: and I felt its justice. I was self-condemned. I crept up to my room, double-locked the door, threw myself on the bed, and gave way to tears of mingled shame and remorse.

That night there was another "hop." I had looked forward to it, only that morning, with unalloyed delight. But now I could not hope that Mr. Talbot would be with me. He would never be to me again what he had been. He might forgive my opinions, distasteful as they were to him; but he could not forget my too evident loss of temper.

My fears were realized. I instinctively avoided him, even turned my back, and looked away, to save my pride. So, except a stately, but studiously polite bow, when he first caught my eye, he gave no sign of his being aware of my presence. He was the life of the party, meantime; affable to all; but to Georgiana he was absolutely devoted. Once or twice, in waltzing, he and she nearly ran against me; but except a hasty, indifferent, "pardon me," there was nothing said.

I did not want for partners; but I was abstracted in spite of myself, and was glad to escape early to my room.

How miserably unhappy I was! But I no longer thought, with regret, of my vehement manner. A sense of injustice and cruel neglect possessed me.

"Let him scorn me," I said, bitterly. "What do I care? I told him nothing but the truth. We women *are* unjustly treated in all things; and from the cradle to the grave. If I had deferred humbly to his opinion I might——"

I stopped, with a haughty gesture. I would not suffer myself to think that I had ever dreamed so foolish a dream. But I lay awake nevertheless for hours; and I had never been so unhappy, even when a child. (TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE OLD STONE MANSION.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON, AUTHOR OF "THE VALLEY FARM," "MABEL," "KATE AYLESFORD," &c.

[Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1859, by Charles J. Peterson, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, in and for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.]

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CHAPTER IX.

IN this unhappy mood I remained for several days. Mr. Talbot had left, the evening after the dance, to be absent, as I heard Georgiana say, for nearly a week.

One day, I was sitting in my favorite alcove, above the sea, when Senator Clare approached. He and I had lately become quite friendly: at least, he often stopped to talk to me. He began now gayly,

"Poetizing beside the ocean again, eh! Miss Gray?" For the Senator would insist I was literary, and wrote poetry, in spite of my denials.

"It is unwritten poetry, then," I replied.

"Perverse as ever," was his rejoinder. "Now if I was only the favored one, who was allowed a peep into that port-folio. At any rate," he continued, observing I was annoyed at his pertinacity, "if you do not write poetry, I am sure you feel it. Your love for the sea is unaffected. Others talk of it twice as much as you do, but one sees they are not in earnest."

"Yes! I love the ocean," I answered, abstractedly. "It seems to me like some great, beautiful monster, that fascinates me beyond words."

"Mrs. Clare and I were watching you, yesterday, when you were bathing. You entered into the spirit of it as no one else does. Are you not afraid to go out so far alone?"

It was the custom at this watering-place, as at most American ones, for ladies to be attended by a husband, brother, or male acquaintance, when in the breakers. As I had neither husband, nor brother, and knew my uncle's selfishness, I always bathed by myself, for I would not permit any other gentleman to assist me.

"Oh! no," I replied. "Why should I fear? I am always careful to keep on safe ground. Besides, I swim."

"We were observing you floating. I wish every lady had your courage. When I was younger I would sport, for hours, in the breakers; but I am getting too old now."

"I think it is less strength than skill that is required. The surf is sometimes very heavy,

but I have never yet lost my footing. The knack comes by nature, perhaps."

"You bathe, certainly, as if you were born to it. I can recognize you among a hundred. Mr. Talbot was saying the same, only the other morning, when he and I stood looking at you. It was the very day he left. The waves came racing in, like greyhounds coursing. You stood, your shoulder slightly inclined to the rollers, your hat disappearing and reappearing, as they rushed over you; 'that famous hat,' he cried, 'it is like the plume of Henry of Navarre, always in front of the battle.' It was wonderful how you kept your ground. I said as much, but he told me of a certain sailing party," and the Senator looked archly at me, "and answered that your courage was never temerity, though you had the mettle of a thorough-bred. The metaphor is mine, not his, and I beg your pardon: we old lovers of the turf are often jockeys even in our talk."

It was not, however, at the comparison that I colored. My emotion arose from anything but anger. I remembered that all this had been said, by Mr. Talbot, after I had supposed I had offended him hopelessly. It was happiness that called the crimson to my cheek.

"But I declare," said the Senator, rising, "if here isn't Mr. Talbot himself. Talk of a certain personage, eh! Miss Gray. He is coming, just in time, for I know you have been dreadfully bored by an old fellow like me."

I recognized the footstep, though still distant. But I did not dare to look up. I heard it approach and stop beside me. Still I gazed immovably before me. My heart was beating fast.

"And Miss Grey too," said that rich, manly voice, thrilling through and through me, "I hope she, also, is glad to see an old friend."

I raised my eyes, and took his proffered hand, with what composure I could, stammering out something in reply. Every trace of resentment, if there ever had been any, had vanished from those frank eyes.

For a few minutes, during which Senator Clare

"Hanged, the conversation was desultory, even gay. If I had wished to be reserved to Mr. Talbot, I could not, in the presence of the Senator, for one so shrewd would have noticed it and read my secret; but I did not wish to be. I felt I had been miserable without cause, and was only too happy to forget the past, if Mr. Talbot had forgotten it.

When Senator Clare left, Mr. Talbot took a seat beside me, and looking archly at me, said,

"I have found out something, since I was away."

"Ah!" I said, inquiringly, not knowing what else to say, for his manner strangely embarrassed me.

"We are old acquaintances."

I looked my surprise. He evidently meant we had met before this summer; and I was not conscious of it.

"Indeed?" I said. "Are you sure?"

My hand lay on my lap. He took it up in his own broad palm, as if he had a right to it. I did not resist him, though no other man had ever been allowed to retain it even for an instant.

"I am sure as that I hold this now," he answered; and he lifted my hand to his lips and kissed it. "These little, taper fingers," he continued, looking into my eyes, and speaking in a low, tender voice, "are not more delicate than *she* was then."

His tone, his whole manner, revealed to me that I was loved. I was dizzy with bliss. But I tried to turn the conversation from the dangerous point, as women will, stammering something about not understanding where we could have met.

He looked at me, full of infinite love; paused, and went on.

"It all came back to me, like a flash," he said, still retaining my hand, and smiling at my perplexed look. "I was walking in a certain street, the other day, when I recollected, suddenly, that I had been there, years and years ago. How vividly the scene returned to me! The snow-covered ground; the big bully of a boy; the broken pitcher; and two eyes, that looked up at me so appealingly, that I have never forgotten them. And they are the very same eyes in the woman that they were in the child."

He pressed my hand as he finished. It came back to me also like a flash. The same bold, frank eyes were looking into mine now, that had cheered and encouraged me, on that dreadful day.

I felt myself blush to the very forehead. Then my glance sunk beneath his.

"And it was you!" I murmured. "I see it all now. How could I have——"

I stopped. I blushed more guiltily than before. Yet oh! how happy I was to recognize, in him, my boyish defender.

"I wonder I was so long in discovering you," he said. "From the first hour I saw you here, I felt there was something about you, I could not tell what, which seemed to me strangely familiar. Looks would come back to me, from the far, far past, like those I saw daily in your eyes."

"But how did you know, at last, that it was I?"

"Haven't you just admitted it?" he said, archly. "I felt sure I was right," he added, in a deeper tone, "and was curious to know if you would recollect it."

Ah! little did he know, I said to myself, how well I had recollected it; how, for years, that brave lad had been my childish idea of a hero.

There was a silence, which he was the first to break.

"I had other reasons, too, for my belief. I used often to think of that little girl, and wonder what became of her: so much so, that, at last, I went to the house, which I had seen her enter, and asked about her. They told me of the death of your mother, and that you had been taken away by an uncle. Both his name and yours I had forgot, in the course of time; but they came back, all at once, as I stood in the narrow street again; and I remembered that they coincided with yours and Mr. Elliott's."

He paused a moment: then went on, his voice taking a tenderer tone.

"I had the good fortune to defend you once, dear Margaret: will you not permit me to be your defender all your life? Heaven surely has intended us for each other. I feel, that, between our souls, now that we are adults, there is a sympathy that can never die. Is it not so?"

What could I say? What I did say, the reader will imagine, from what I have told of myself before.

The engagement made a great talk. I had wished to keep it secret, but Georgianna, in a fit of spleen, proclaimed it, knowing it would annoy me. Impertinent young ladies told me how all the rest envied me, and as the mothers, generally, looked coldly on me, I suppose I was told the truth. I was quite ready, for my part, to believe that I was legitimately a subject of envy, for no nobler man lived, or had ever lived, I said to myself, than Mr. Talbot.

"Ah! sly fox," said Senator Clare, to me, "I knew how it would be. I told Mrs. Clare, long

ago, that if two people were ever made for each other, you and Talbot were. No ordinary woman would have been able to win him. He needed a strong, original character like yours, feminine, but still heroic. It is not mere compliment, my dear child," he added, in a serious tone, "when I say this. God bless you. It is an old man's hearty benediction; but it is sincere."

CHAPTER X.

We returned to the city in September. My marriage was to take place in the beginning of the year.

My uncle and aunt, though studiously polite to me, could not forgive me for having, as they thought, supplanted Georgiana. Their secret aversion was such, that I often thought, if I had not been about to become the wife of the rich and celebrated Mr. Talbot, they would have broken with me openly.

Mr. Talbot spent more than half of his time in our city. When he was with me, I was happy, but during his absences I had many sad hours; and I counted, with impatience, the days yet to elapse before I should have a right to be always with him.

Of Georgiana I saw very little. Her evenings were consumed by a round of parties, and her mornings were generally spent abroad. I learned, accidentally, from her maid, that she had become an early riser, and often took long walks before breakfast. She seemed to avoid my society; and when we met was reserved. On more than one occasion, when I saw her in society, I was struck with her unnaturally gay spirits. What little confidence had grown up between us, since we had become women, had ceased from the day Mr. Talbot had asked my hand. Thus alienated from nearly all the household, I devoted much of my time to Rosalie. We were together more than ever. Often, I said to myself, that my only regret, in leaving my uncle's family, would be my separation from her.

We had been in town about two months, when Georgiana's birth-day came around. It was to be celebrated by a great ball. The preparations for this event threw my cousin and myself frequently together, for there was much to consult about; and the great inequality of her spirits now struck me more than ever. I could not avoid the conclusion that she had some secret cause of unhappiness. Had I not known that she had never loved Mr. Talbot, but only intrigued to get him through sheer vanity, and perhaps a little pique at the unexplained departure of her supposed noble admirer, I might

have imagined it was disappointed affection. More than once I was on the point of soliciting her confidence. But she always repelled even the slightest approaches of this description, coldly and haughtily. If her mother noticed her abstracted air, or unconscious sighs, she would break into a laugh, declare it was all imagination, and say she never felt better or happier in her life.

The ball went off brilliantly. Georgiana had never looked more beautiful, or seemed in higher spirits. Her parents, proud of the admiration she created, followed her with their eyes wherever she went.

"I declare," said Mr. Talbot, gayly, "your cousin is almost as beautiful as yourself."

"Almost!" I retorted, in the same spirit. "It is well there is that saving clause. I don't think I should ever forgive you otherwise."

"It is more of a triumph to her parents than even to herself. How your uncle and aunt seem to worship her. What a strange thing parental love is."

I read his thoughts. He was wondering how Georgiana, whom he thought so silly, could have inspired such attachment. But he solved the riddle immediately.

"In fact, however," he continued, as if speaking to himself, "it is themselves, in such cases, that parents love. Georgiana is showy, full of tact, and fashionably accomplished; they expect her to make a great match; and that hope, as well as the admiration she excites, gratifies their vanity."

"You modern Rochefaucault," I said, playfully, dropping his arm on which I had been leaning, "Avaunt!"

"Why not Mephistophles at once?" he answered, laughing.

"Well then Mephistophles," I cried. "I have no patience with you. You are always looking out for bad motives."

"Not always," he said. "I don't think there's anything selfish in your love for Rosalie, for example. But, perhaps, we lawyers do look too much at the worse side of humanity. However, be it vanity or not, which makes your uncle and aunt adore Georgy, her death would be a blow none the less terrible."

"I believe it would nearly kill them."

I have recorded this conversation, because, often afterward, it recurred to me as having been almost prophetic.

Early the next morning, I went down to the deserted apartments, in order to see that the servants were prompt at rearranging them. Every one knows what a sad spectacle a ball-room pre-

agents the following day. As I looked around, a feeling of melancholy, almost indescribable, stole over me. To have sat down and cried would have been a relief. I had never felt so, without sufficient cause, before; and I was ashamed of myself for being, as I thought, hysterical. Alas! it was a presentiment of evil.

The breakfast bell rang, an hour later than usual, and though every one looked haggard, all obeyed it, except Georgiana. After waiting for a quarter of an hour, her father, who was a martinet in punctuality, testily ordered her to be summoned.

"Poor thing," said her mother, apologetically, "let her sleep. We can breakfast for once without her, father. She must be quite worn out."

"Not more than we are," answered Mr. Elliott, who was always out of humor if he had to wait for a meal. "Let her get up, like the rest of us. It was for her pleasure the house has been turned topsy-turvy; and the least she can do is not to keep breakfast standing."

When my uncle spoke in this way there was no appeal. A servant, therefore, was despatched to Georgiana's door; but the poor creature returned immediately, followed by my cousin's maid, consternation on both their faces.

My uncle and aunt rose at once, divining something terrible. But neither could form words to speak. It devolved on me to interrogate the maids.

Both spoke at once. Georgiana's room was empty, they said, and her bed had not been disturbed.

Simultaneously we three, uncle, aunt and myself, rushed up stairs; my uncle with an oath, my aunt shrieking, myself with a dreadful suspicion at my heart. The servants followed after. I looked back at Georgiana's maid, and read in her face, though she strove to appear frightened, that she knew more about the affair than she chose to tell; and my suspicions and fears began to assume shape.

Mr. Elliott was the first to reach the chamber. His eye instantly detected a note, left conspicuously on the dressing-table, which he read rapidly through, threw with an oath at his wife, and then rushed down stairs, exclaiming that Georgiana had disgraced them forever, and shouting for a carriage and policemen.

My aunt took up the letter, but her hand shook so that she could not see, and I was compelled I offer to assist her. Leading her to the bed, to ordered the servants from the room, and then read the note aloud, the poor mother rocking to and fro, and wringing her hands, except when she broke into audible sobbings

My conscience smote me as I read. Georgiana had eloped, the letter said, with one whom she knew her parents were prejudiced against, but who was all nobleness and virtue, as they would yet discover. He had loved her, she wrote, ever since he first saw her, at the sea-shore, in the summer; but had not dared then to breathe his hopes, because an old enemy of his, Mr. Talbot, had, he knew, prejudiced her parents against him. Since then, however, he had followed Georgiana home; they had met frequently; and she had finally consented to be his; indeed, she had loved him, she said, from their first meeting. The missive ended with what is, I suppose, the usual conclusion in such cases, an entreaty for forgiveness.

I had no difficulty in solving parts of this riddle. Georgiana had eloped with Mr. Despencer, the adventurer who had disappeared so suddenly, the day after Mr. Talbot's arrival. But other parts of it were still enigmatical. I had always intended to tell Georgiana this man's true character; but had forgotten to do it; and I had never since even heard his name mentioned in the family. From my aunt I could extract no information. She had never known, she said, that he had visited at the house—how then could it be supposed that she or her husband was prejudiced against him? My poor aunt, on saying this, began to reproach her child, and went into violent hysterics.

The problem was not unriddled till later in the day, when my uncle, having returned from an unsuccessful pursuit of the fugitives, and my aunt having partially recovered, I mentioned my suspicion that Georgiana's maid knew more of the affair than any of us. My uncle had her immediately summoned, and by locking the door, threatening her with a prison, and promising her a large reward, he so worked on her alternate fears and cupidity, that she finally betrayed her mistress. By putting together what she revealed; what I already knew; and what I suspected, I got at the full truth.

It seems, that, within a few days after our return, Mr. Despencer had waylaid the maid, and by a liberal reward had induced her to send him word the next time Georgiana went out alone. Thus informed, he had met my cousin, as if accidentally, and renewed their acquaintance. Georgiana, mortified by the loss of Mr. Talbot, and having always secretly liked Mr. Despencer, consented, after one or two of these apparently chance interviews, to meet him clandestinely. Hence her walks before breakfast.

"Miss Elliott," continued the maid, "used to tell me all. How that Mr. Despencer was a lord

in disguise, but that Mr. Talbot, he knew, had set you, sir, against him, so that it was of no use for him to visit here openly. How that there was no way but to elope and trust to forgiveness afterward. How that she was as good as an only daughter and you couldn't help forgiving her. And how he wanted Miss to run away long ago, but she wouldn't, hoping something would turn up, and when she gave up this hope, she told him she must wait, anyhow, till after her ball."

"So," cried my uncle, choking with rage, "you knew all this, and didn't tell me."

The girl began to whimper. I feared, that, if the scene was protracted, Mr. Elliott might do what he would afterward regret, so I took the responsibility of unlocking the door, and signing for the maid to depart. He scowled at me, but said nothing; and I also left in order to see my aunt and give her the solution to the mystery.

I will not dwell on the week that followed. My uncle raved and stormed, vowing, fifty times a day, that he would kill Georgiana's husband, "if he ever caught the villain," and that he would never forgive her, "if she crawled on her knees, the length of a continent, to ask pardon." My aunt kept her bed, where she moaned and moaned, as if her heart was breaking.

I soon found that my presence was irksome to both of them. I had told them, frankly, what I had overheard about Mr. Despencer, and they could not forgive my not having repented it to Georgiana. My own remorse for this thoughtlessness, meantime, was great. Sometimes I fancied that Georgiana would have been saved, if she had known all. Once or twice I saw my uncle scowl at me, in a way that would have led to an explosion, I am sure, if I had not been the affianced bride of Mr. Talbot; but even in his misery, he was true to his character, and stood in awe of superior position. That I was not wrong in my surmise, events soon disclosed.

I have forgot to say, that Mr. Talbot had left the city, by the midnight train, the evening of the ball, on a business visit to Washington. I wrote to him, at once, telling him what a miserable house ours was; asking him if anything could be done; reproaching myself; and begging him, as soon as he could, to return. A hurried line reached me, on the fourth day, saying he would be back at the end of a week; and I was anxiously expecting him, when, one morning, a letter came from Georgiana, announcing her return from her bridal tour, and asking me to come and see her. The messenger, she said, would wait for me, in a carriage, as they were located, for the present, in a

country mansion, which her husband had hired, a few miles out of town.

CHAPTER XI.

I DID not hesitate a moment. I had long forgot all her unkindness, I remembered only my remorse. "If I can do anything for her, if I can help to reconcile her to her parents, I will do it, at any cost," I said.

I had scarcely uttered this sentiment, and was hurriedly tying on my bonnet before the drawing-room mirror, for I was in such haste to go that I had sent a servant up stairs for my things, when there was a ring at the door that I recognized, and which made my heart leap into my throat. I rushed to the hall, just in time to welcome Mr. Talbot.

"I have traveled all night," he said, in answer to my exclamation at his jaded appearance. "But I can't look half as worn as you do. My dear Margaret," and he drew me to him, "you take this affair too much to heart."

I burst into tears. These were the first words of kindness I had heard for a week.

"Oh! no," I said, shaking my head, "I have caused it all. If I had only told Georgiana. But indeed, indeed, it seemed so trivial, it looked so much like gossip, that I quite forgot it."

He kissed me, and soothed me, saying, again and again, that my nervous system was broken down, and that I was consequently morbid, or I would not talk so.

"But you are going out," he said, at last. "I remember seeing a carriage at the door. Perhaps it is something important. If so, we will talk of all this when you get back."

"Oh! yes, I had forgot," I answered, rising. "I am going out, and there is no time to lose. Won't you come too?" I cried, eagerly, "I am going to see Georgiana."

"Going to see Georgiana!"

The look and tone that accompanied these words threw a sudden chill over my enthusiasm. I had supposed that there could be no doubt of the propriety, nay! of the positive duty of my going; but somehow I felt now as if this was not so certain. It was evident, at least, that Mr. Talbot disapproved of the proceeding.

"Georgianna has written to me," I said, recovering myself, after a moment, "begging me to come, in order to advise her what to do." I hesitated, then added. "And I feel that I ought to go."

My heart beat fast as I spoke, for there had never been since our engagement, the slightest approach to any difference of opinion between

us. Yet I knew, that, if Mr. Talbot had a fault, it was in being inflexible to obstinacy, in regard to what he thought the right, and especially in regard to the conduct of women. On some points also I suspected that he was the victim of what, in any other, I should have called prejudice. I felt, instinctively, that this was one of those points.

Mr. Talbot was silent for a moment. He bit his lip, looking on the ground, evidently both annoyed and hurt. At last he spoke.

"You really must give up this visit, Margaret," he said. "I cannot consent to let you go."

Had he spoken differently, had his tone been less authoritative, I might have yielded. But alas! for both of us, he roused all the woman in me by these words.

The blood mounted to my forehead. Consent! Was he, then, my master? No! I was not married yet; and I could, and would, do as I pleased.

Besides, ought not husband and wife to be alike as to rights? Was not each entitled to his or her conscientious opinion? Was not any attempt, on the part of the man, to claim authority to control the woman, tyrannical?

It is true I loved Mr. Talbot. But was I, like so many other women, those recreants to their sex as I had been accustomed to call them, to abandon my principles at the first temptation? Was I also to become a slave, because I loved? My eye kindled, as these thoughts passed through me.

Mr. Talbot read my sentiments. But he was as resolute, as unflinching as myself.

"Margaret," he said, at last, solemnly, "think well what you are about to do. It is no mere whim that makes me object to your seeing Georgiana. If you could visit her without involving me, I would stop with an expostulation——"

"But now you command——"

I spoke in some heat. God forgive me! But I was irritable from that week's anxiety, and his tone, whether he meant it or not, was even more exasperating than his words.

He looked at me in surprise. Then his brow began to contract.

"I will be frank with you, Margaret," he said. "We are to be married so soon, that I think I have a right, equitably at least, to exercise some control over you even now. As my wife I cannot consent to your associating with your cousin. Her husband is a mere adventurer. Once, as you know, I had almost sent him to the penitentiary. You cannot visit his wife, without, as my wife, countenancing him; and to that extent embarrassing me. He will boast of an acquaintance, nay! connection, and so secure *entree* into

circles whence otherwise he would be excluded. He is full of tact. If you notice them at all, he will obtain character and credit in consequence of it. This I cannot consent to. I must insist, therefore, that you do not go, unless," he paused, "unless you promise, at the same time, never to repeat the visit."

I believe I would have yielded to this compromise, if it had not been for that one word "insist;" for I felt the force of his argument. For a moment, indeed, I was on the point of giving way. But a something within me whispered that I was weak; that I was surrendering to love and not to conviction; and this made me as firm as a rock.

"Mr. Talbot," I said, coldly, "I believe I am a reasoning creature as well as yourself. And I have a duty to perform to others as well as to you. Through my neglect, Georgiana has become the wife of this man; I owe her some reparation; and as long as she wishes me to stand by her, I will not be so cowardly as to cast her off."

We looked at each other. Neither flinched.

"So be it," replied Mr. Talbot, beginning to button up his coat. He was greatly agitated. "So be it." He took a step or two as if departing.

But suddenly he turned, walked up to me, and seized my hand.

"Margaret," he cried, in a voice husky with emotion. "For God's sake think what you do! Be just to yourself as well as to me. Let us not be separated on so trivial a matter. If you love me, you will make this sacrifice."

His first words had melted me. His last made me as rigid as ever.

"If I do not love you," I said, "because I will not yield, neither do you love me, for neither will you yield. But since you say I don't love, the sooner this bauble," and I took my engagement ring from my finger, "is returned to you, the better."

He did not, at first, take the ring. He was more forbearing than myself. He looked at me steadily. If there had been any relenting on his part, I might have relented also. But I saw that he was waiting, not because there was any chance of his opinion changing, but because he hoped mine would, and that I would yield. He evidently thought, that, in the relations that existed between us, it was as much my duty to obey as if I had been his wife; and he as evidently held to the belief that the husband was the head of the household. Something of this found expression.

"I was too hasty," he said, still hesitating.

"I am satisfied you love me, Margaret. Forgive me!" I was relenting fast. But his next words destroyed all. "Yet more than love is necessary. Where there is an irreconcilable difference of opinion, as there seems to be on this point, either the man or the woman must yield; and it is the wife's duty, in such cases, to surrender to the husband, else there would be no unity of action. A house divided against itself cannot stand. Society holds the husband responsible for the wife's behavior; he ought, therefore, to control it; and I shall expect you, in matters of this kind, to give up to me."

I believe no man yet ever understood a woman. These words exasperated me to such a degree, that, for the time, all love for the speaker went out from me. They seemed so logically correct, however, in Mr. Talbot's eyes, that he was apparently surprised at their effect. Ah! why did he not know, that, after marriage, a wife insensibly yields all? Why did he thrust before me, so obtrusively, the chain I was to wear?

"Sir," I said, removing my hand and drawing myself up with dignity, "I see, now, it is you who does not love. You are not my conscience-keeper. Thank God! that I find out, before it is too late, what degradation is expected of me."

This time he took the ring, which I again extended to him. One long, sad look he cast on me, a look, oh! how reproachful, and then, without a word, bowed and retired. A moment after, I heard the front door close and knew that all was over between us.

Yes! all was over. But alas! I had not that assured consciousness, which I ought to have had, that I was wholly in the right, and he wholly in the wrong. The instant he passed from my sight doubt made me its prey. Had I not been too hasty? Had I not again lost my temper? Was he not right, after all? I rushed to the window to summon him back. But pride checked me just as my hand was on the casement. No! the deed was done: I would abide by it.

Then I went over the old arguments to prove that I was right. I said to myself that he was imperious; that I never could have been happy with him; that, if I had yielded in this matter, he would have expected me to yield always, even when he was indisputably in the wrong.

I thought also of my sex. If all would do as I had done, the tyranny of man would soon be over. I congratulated myself on being a martyr. I felt a heroic exaltation which buoyed me up, for awhile, indescribably.

But it would not do. In spite of all, I was miserably unhappy. I stood, reasoning thus

with myself, but feeling more utterly desolate every moment, till at last my fortitude gave way, I burst into a passion of tears, and throwing myself on the sofa, wept as if my heart would break.

CHAPTER XII.

My passion of tears had not yet spent itself, when there was a tap at the parlor door. I commanded myself sufficiently to ask, in a composed voice, who was there?

"It is me," answered my uncle's waiter. "The cabman, at the door, has rung twice to know if you are going, or whether he shall drive off."

I had utterly forgotten my visit to Georgiana. I now rose feebly.

"Tell the man I will be there presently," I said. I waited till I heard the waiter pass down the hall, for I did not wish to be seen, and then slipped up stairs, in order to wash my inflamed eyes, and bathe my aching temples.

During the drive to Georgiana's, my thoughts were of my late interview, not of her. In vain I tried to dismiss it; the parting looks and words of Mr. Talbot would come back; and I was on the point, several times, of giving way to tears again. For the more I reflected, the less I was satisfied with myself. I felt I had been too hasty, too passionate, too proud. Oh! I would have given anything to have had the last few hours to act over again. Yet though I knew I had but to order the carriage back to town, and despatch a note to Mr. Talbot, that very pride kept me from doing it.

We left the city, by one of its northern outlets, and found ourselves driving amid abandoned fields. On the dusty herbage of some of these, sheep were grazing; others were dug up for brick-yards; on still others straggling rows of houses were being put up. Suddenly we turned into a shady lane, one side of which was bounded by a spacious park, over whose velvety turf great trees were scattered singly or in clumps, letting the yellow sunshine drop down silently between them, like gold filtered from the sky. A noble mansion, half concealed by foliage, stood at the further extremity of the park.

"It is here, I suppose, that Georgiana lives," I said to myself. "What a poetical home! It is quite the place to take a bride to." And I thought better of her husband already.

But the driver, instead of turning in at the massive gates, kept on, and when I pulled the check-string, and asked him if he had not made a mistake, he answered in the negative, with a shrug of the shoulders, that destroyed all my romantic illusions.

After proceeding a couple of miles further, we entered a lonely cross-road, and descending a hill, alongside of a sombre wood, found ourselves in a narrow, gloomy valley, through which ran a small, sullen stream, which, where we crossed it, on a rickety bridge, ran black as death below. A little to the right, in the midst of a grove of ancient white pines, stood an old stone house, which had evidently been the country seat of some rich citizen, fifty years before, but which had long been in decay. The roof was covered with moss, and damp with the drippings of the overhanging pines, and in more than one place the shingles had rotted off. The shutters were gone from most of the upper windows. One side of the house, indeed, appeared to be untenable. Weeds grew rank and high before the door, and across what had once been a graveled walk. An octagonal pavilion, on a mound, had been turned into a hay-rick, and the conical roof of an old-fashioned ice-house had tumbled in, revealing a yawning pit, full of broken timbers and stones. Most of the palings were down, that had shut in the little lawn, once, doubtless, as trim as flowers and grass could make it, but now retaining no vestige of its aristocratic days, except a gigantic box-tree, that had been formerly clipped, but had since nearly grown out of shape, and was half dead.

My heart sank as I saw the driver turn into this ruinous place. It looked as if it had been the scene of a murder, years and years ago, and had been left to rats, and owls, and ghosts ever since. When the man got down, to open the rickety gate, my blood ran cold, nor had I recovered myself, when the coach, rumbling and jostling over the stony lane, which the rains had washed into huge gullies, stopped before the dilapidated door.

Georgiana was waiting to receive me. I thought she looked disappointed when she saw I came alone. There was, at first, therefore, some constraint between us. She led the way, however, in shaking it off.

"I'm so glad you've come," she said, kissing me, and conducting me into the house. "I knew I could depend on you, at least: and so I told Arthur. Poor Arthur! he is so worried, because, as he says, if it hadn't been for him, I'd never have come to this old, ruinous place; and he's no better one, till his difficulties are over, to take me to. It's not so bad, though, as it looks from the outside," she continued, opening a door on the left, and showing me into what had been a handsome room, and was still a comfortable one, for it was comparatively well furnished with modern furniture, and had a cheerful fire that

made the atmosphere feel very different from the chill, damp one of the hall. "We have this for a parlor, and a couple of nice rooms up stairs, one of which shall be yours, when you come to stay over night, which I hope you'll do often, at least till you're married. Arthur," she added, with a sigh, "has to be away, he says, a great deal."

The sigh and the tone told how lonely she was, at such times; but she did not say so. She was, in this respect, improved already.

By this time, she had taken my bonnet off, when I heard the rumbling of the coach, as if it was going away; and I started up from the chair into which she had pressed me.

"Oh!" she said, "it is all right. Arthur employed the man, and told him not to come for you till night: for I was determined to have you for the whole day. Sit down while I stir the fire."

All this was so unlike the Georgianna of a few months ago, that I could not help looking at her wonderingly. She had changed, even in the week she had been gone. There was a sad, worn look in her face, painful to see. Anxiety to recover her parents' favor could not account for that expression.

"You have no good news to tell me," she said, after a pause, and speaking with an effort. "Is father very angry?"

It was characteristic of her that she did not speak of her mother. She had always loved, as well as feared, her father most. She had been his pet and she knew it.

"I am afraid it will be a long time before he forgives you," was my hesitating answer.

She did not reply for some time. But I saw that her lip quivered and that she leaned against the mantle-piece for support.

"What did he say?" she asked, at last, with a trembling voice, looking at the fire.

I told her, as delicately as I could, all that had happened, softening her father's harsh expressions, wherever it was possible to do so without infringing on the substantial truth of my story. Once or twice she interrupted me to ask a question. But for most of the time, she stood leaning against the chimney-piece, with her face averted, crying to herself.

"But let us hope for the best," I said, when I had finished. "Men of your father's nature are passionate and unrelenting at first, but more apt to forgive, after awhile, than characters which are less demonstrative."

"That is true," she answered, reflecting for awhile; and she sighed. "I wouldn't care so much, if it wasn't for Arthur. But pa will come

round yet. He can't be so cruel." And a forced smile shone wanly across her face, as she added. "This is not very hospitable, however: you've been here an hour, and I've offered you no refreshments; what will you have? A glass of wine and a bit of cake for luncheon? Or shall we have an early dinner? Arthur won't be home till dark, and told me not to wait for him."

There was something in her manner, rather than in her words, when she spoke of her husband, that convinced me she was not entirely happy with him. She evidently loved him, but seemed to fear him. Already she was beginning, I said to myself, to drink the fruits of her waywardness and disobedience. Yet I pitied her, with all her errors, the more that I felt, that, but for me, she might have been saved.

I did my best to cheer her, though I was far from cheerful myself. She innocently made me wince, more than once, when she referred to my approaching marriage.

We dined in a back apartment, similar to the one we had been sitting in; and were waited on by an old woman, who seemed to be cook and maid-of-all-work in one. After dinner we returned to the parlor, where I began to wonder why the carriage did not return, for night was approaching. The autumn wind wailed dismally among the pines, and directly the rain began to dash against the windows. At last, the jolting of wheels was heard. Georgianna, who had been uneasy, on my account, for some time, ran to the window and said it was the cabman.

"But there is a cart with him," she added, immediately, and in a tone of some surprise. "And stay, surely I know those things; they are your trunks. Ah! I see it all," said she turned and kissed me joyfully, "you have done this to surprise me. You have sent slyly, for your wardrobe and are going to make me a visit. You don't know how I thank you."

I realized, from her unaffected delight, how lonely she had felt. But I was so much astonished, at what she said, that I hurried to the window, believing that there must be some mistake. There was none, however. The cart, by this time, had drawn up to the door, and the cabman was throwing my trunks on the decayed door-steps, in the rain and wet.

At the same moment, the woman, who had waited on us at dinner, entered the room with a letter, which she handed to me.

"What can it all mean?" I said. "This is your father's writing. Ah! I understand."

These exclamations had followed each other, as I received the letter, glanced at the direction,

opened it, and began to read. I tore up the missive, to prevent Georgianna from asking to see it, as soon as I had finished perusing it; and threw the fragments into the fire; or I would transcribe it here. But its purport, and even many of its phrases, I shall never forget.

It seems that my aunt had been in the back parlor, which was separated, by folding-doors, as is still the case in many old mansions, from the front one, during my interview with Mr. Talbot. While I was up stairs, as I afterward discovered, my uncle had come in; and she had told him what she had overheard. He had immediately ascertained the number of the coach, in which I had left the house, and, when it returned to its stand, had sent for it. Meantime, my wardrobe had been collected, and packed into a cart, ready to be despatched to me. The cabman, when he came, was given a letter, with instructions to deliver my baggage on the spot, or drive me elsewhere, if I wished.

The letter itself reproached me, not very consistently, considering for whose cause I had quarreled with Mr. Talbot, with having undermined Georgianna, with having trapped her into her marriage, and with still abetting her in her disobedience. I was, it said, ungrateful, artful, insolent and treacherous. But I was, at last, found out. My very victim, Mr. Talbot, had discovered my true character, and cast me off; and the writer hastened to follow his example. I should no longer insult him, or my aunt, with my presence. They utterly disowned me, and forever. They had sent me such things as were mine, though I did not deserve it, and they wished never again to hear my name. As to applying to them, by letter, or seeking an interview, it would be useless.

My uncle was neither a coherent talker, nor writer, and this letter was one of his most involved productions. The very handwriting trembled with passion. In every sentence was revealed the hatred and revenge, which only the wealth and position of Mr. Talbot had restrained, and which now had full sway.

Pride and indignation were my first emotions, when I had finished perusing the epistle. I looked up. The eyes of Georgianna were fixed on me inquiringly. Calmly I walked to the fire, as I have said, tore the letter up, and threw the pieces deliberately into the flames. Then, as concealment was no longer possible, I told my cousin of the breach between Mr. Talbot and myself, and that her father had turned me out of doors.

She was at my side in a moment. The many slights she had put upon me, in her rich and

insolent days, were forgiven and forgotten from that hour. She was one of those, whom sorrow improves. Had I been a sister she could not have been kinder.

"You shall stay with us," she said, kissing me. "Arthur will be so glad, for he is compelled to leave me a great deal alone, and I know it gives him pain. You have come to all this, too, because you took my part. Ah! Maggy, it is just like you, always thinking of others before yourself."

I was really grateful for so hearty a welcome. For I felt that I had no other place to go to, at least that night, and that I should have been compelled to ask for a temporary home with her, even if she had not offered it. This much I saw, though I was yet too stunned by the events of the day, to reflect clearly, either on my real position, or on my future plans.

It was now Georgiana's turn to try to be cheerful. She led the way gayly to my room, superintended the bringing up of my things, and kept assuring me "Arthur would be so glad

that I was to live with them." But I was not so certain of this. Even my temporary sojourn with them, till I could find some means of employment, I began to think might be distasteful to him; for it was plain his pecuniary resources were small; and it was probable he would dislike me on Mr. Talbot's account. The events of the day had left me nervous, so that, as the hour for his return approached, I began to wish almost that I had rejected Georgiana's invitation, and gone elsewhere. But where could I go? This continually returning question, and the ever repeated answer, that I had nowhere to go, humiliated me beyond words. If Mr. Talbot had wished for revenge, he was having it already.

At last Mr. Despencer arrived. We heard him in the hall below, stamping the water from his boots; and Georgiana hurried down to meet him; while I remained, sitting in the twilight, listening to the rain beating against the casements, and feeling as if I had nothing now to live for, nothing to hope for, hereafter.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE OLD STONE MANSION.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON, AUTHOR OF "THE VALLEY FARM," "MABEL," "KATE AYLESFORD," &C.

[Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1859, by Charles J. Peterson, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, in and for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.]

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 219.

CHAPTER XIII.

In a few minutes, my cousin came running eagerly up, saying, "Arthur is so glad you are here."

Mr. Despencer followed her, and taking my hand in both of his, as if we had been old friends, greeted me cordially, and concluded by saying,

"It lifts quite a load from my mind to know you will be with Georgiana, for business will call me much away, and this is a lonely place at best."

I will not deny that I felt relieved at these words. Mr. Despencer had not forgotten his old grace of manner. If his welcome had been that of a Paladin to some wandering and wronged princess, it could not have been accompanied by more delicacy in look and manner. I began to think better of him. I wondered less at what I thought Georgiana's infatuation. My answer, doubtless, revealed something of this change in opinion, for my cousin brightened up and gave me a glance full of grateful thanks. Mr. Despencer noticed it also, and continued quite gallantly,

"You might find it dull, for young married people are apt to forget everybody but themselves," and he looked, half laughingly at Georgiana, who was blushing happily—I had not seen her look so happy before, "but fortunately I brought a friend home with me. Mr. Bentley is quite a beau. I should not wonder if he and you got up a flirtation."

I caught an appealing look from Georgiana to her husband. She had not, I saw, informed Mr. Despencer of the reason for my visit. But he comprehended, with ready tact, that he had made a blunder of some kind, and offering me his arm, conducted me down stairs in silence.

Oh! how that chance allusion wrung my heart. It brought back, in full force, the memory of my happiness, now gone forever, and which, for the last half hour, I had temporarily forgot.

Mr. Bentley was handsome and well dressed. But he had a sinister expression, which made me shudder instinctively, as one shudders at

sight of a snake. He seemed to me a something between a jockey and a black-leg, dressed up in Sunday clothes and practicing manners learned of a dancing-master. The elaborate politeness with which he received his introduction to me increased my aversion to him, as elaborate politeness always does, when I dislike people; besides, elaborate politeness is never honest.

The next day rose clear and crisp. After breakfast, Mr. Despencer and his friend departed for the city. The former was so much out of humor that he could barely restrain himself sufficiently to be civil. Georgiana looked as if she had been crying. I surmised that she had told him how unrelenting her father was: and my surmise proved correct, as she informed me, after the meal was over, by way of apology for her husband's ill-temper. She did not tell me how harsh he had been to her, however, and that this was the cause of her swollen eyes.

Mr. Bentley, however, was still offensively polite. He seemed to think that he could make up for his friend's incivility, by excessive attentions to Georgiana and myself, when he only annoyed the first, and exasperated me. For already I was beginning to hate the man. "Has he the impertinence," I said to myself, as I contrasted him with Mr. Talbot, "to think he can make himself agreeable to me?"

When we were left alone, Georgiana excused herself for an hour or two, on the plea of household affairs, but really, I suspect, to have her cry out unobserved. Left to myself, I set forth to examine the mansion. I had been curious, from what I saw of it the night before, to know where Mr. Bentley had slept, for, except the two chambers occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Despencer and myself, and the loft, which the servant had for a dormitory, I was not aware of any apartments in sufficient repair to be used as sleeping-rooms. I found my anticipations correct. The entire half of the house, on the right of the hall, was in a tenantless condition: the shutters rotted off, or hanging loose; the plaster broke; the ceilings fallen in; the floors decayed. I opened the doors, that led into them from the hall, but

did not enter, for they looked dangerous, and smelt damp and fetid. None had any furniture in. I was forced to conclude that Mr. Bentley slept in an out-house.

In my walks I met the old woman, who had waited on us the day before. It seemed as if the advent of Mr. Bentley, with his sinister look, had cast a glamour over the place which affected everything; for this servant, who, had seemed, when I first saw her, only a vulgar-looking cook and maid-of-all-work, now wore a hag-like expression, which made my blood run cold. Toothless, blear-eyed, withered, with long, skinny fingers, and already bent by age, she came upon me so suddenly, as I turned the angle of the house, that I started with a slight, involuntary scream, as if I had seen a witch.

In the course of my further researches, I detected, at the rear of the hall, a massive door leading to the right, and saw that it conducted to a large apartment, the only room, on that side of the house, not plainly a prey to bats and owls. But whether it was in decay or not I failed to discover, for I could not get admittance into it from any point, as it was protected outside by wooden shutters, firmly bolted within, and though a door led into it from the front room, which had been used as a dining hall in the palmy days of the mansion, that, also, was now tightly locked. As I was trying the fastenings of this door, the old servant who seemed to be prowling about watching me, came up and told me the room was nailed up, and had not been used for twenty years.

When I had exhausted the mansion, I went to the out-houses, but still found no place, except a hay-loft, where Mr. Bentley could have slept. The out-houses were as ruinous as the mansion itself, being mostly covered with moss, or overgrown with briars or poison vines, while between the cracks in their gaping walls, green, slimy lizards ran in and out.

Georgiana still kept her room, when I had finished these explorations, and I knocked in vain for admittance. She had a violent sick head-ache, she said, "wouldn't I excuse her till dinner-time?" The dinner would be at five o'clock, "a late dinner to be sure, but Arthur had promised to return by that hour." She thought if she could get a little sleep she would be quite well again. Poor thing! I read it all. She was exhausted by weeping, and fancied that by secluding herself and courting sleep, she could come out at dinner-time, looking freshly, and so deceive me and her husband.

My only chance of avoiding thought was to keep myself occupied. So, when I found that

Georgiana was not coming down, I resolved to go into the city, and inquire where, or how, I could get work. It had to be done at some time; for I was determined not to be dependent. Why not at once?

I hesitated, at first, thinking that Mr. Talbot might, possibly, relent, and that a note might come from him in my absence. But my pride whispered, that, in such an event, my triumph would be the greater if I was away. "Triumph!" I said to myself, immediately after, "ah! he will never write: there will be no triumph for me; he is inflexible." And saying this, I went up stairs for my bonnet. I was torn by conflicting emotions: now angry at him for what I called his tyranny and obstinacy, now more than half convinced that it was I who had been exacting.

I had talked, often and bravely, of what a true woman could do, in spite of the social injustice that beset her path, if left to provide for herself. I tried, as I walked toward the city, to recall all this and to assure myself that the task before me was an easy one. I had only to will it, I said, and all difficulties would disappear. There was nothing menial in working for one's bread: nothing in the mere act of asking for employment, that should call a blush to the face. But when I reached the place where I had determined to make my first application, my heart failed me. It was a picture dealer's, where I hoped to dispose of a few water-color sketches, which I intended to paint. But I walked past the store, two or three times, before I could muster courage to go in. When, at last, I did enter, and nervously told my errand, the rough, curt way in which I was told that "there was no demand for such things now," made every vein tingle with alternate shame and indignation. I had to school myself, for more than an hour, before I could venture on a second attempt elsewhere: and here the answer was the same.

I do not, in writing this autobiography, seek to extenuate myself. I ought not, I know, to have been either angry or ashamed. My reason told me so, even then. But we are flesh and blood, not mathematical machines. We feel the stings of pride, we resent insult, and this the more readily, the more unhappy and friendless we are. To be poor is no crime, but, in the world's eye at least, it is a stigma. To go about, morning after morning, week after week, soliciting employment, when all avenues are filled, often meeting rudeness and nearly always coldness, is no small cross for a woman to bear. Those who have been accustomed to it, all their lives, feel it to be such. It was worse for me. It was the worse for one proud like I was; for pride was

my besetting sin. I do not wonder that impoverished gentlewomen sometimes starve, rather than run this gauntlet. Oh! how I hated the world for its injustice. For, at that period, I charged all my sufferings to its social code.

I hurry over this part of my story. The public has had a surfeit of such sorrows, and is sick of the wrongs of distressed women. And in fact, terrible as this physical suffering is, it is nothing when compared with the mental ones I had to endure. Poverty, even starvation, can be borne better than the loss of love, infinitely better than the sense of one's having done wrong. The pain of the body is nothing to the agony of the soul. Yes! I could have borne all, if I had had within me, an assured consciousness of right-doing. But the more I reflected on my behavior, the more doubtful I felt of its correctness.

To dismiss this part of my story, once for all. After trying various more lucrative avenues to employment, and finding that all were overcrowded, I was compelled to take up with plain needle-work, which I obtained at a House of Industry, an institution established, to provide employment for persons situated like myself. I had put off applying at this place as long as I could, for I knew many of the ladies who managed it; and my pride revolted at being seen soliciting work, by those, who, a month ago, would have been glad to have been my rivals. More than once, when I took back the tasks I had finished, I had to draw down my veil quickly, to prevent being recognized, by former acquaintances, on their way from the managers' room to their carriages. My conduct was foolish, perhaps; but I was human.

It was no perverse wish to be independent that drove me to this sacrifice of pride. I soon reconciled myself to accepting a home from Georgiana, for I saw that I could be useful to her in many ways. But when I had left my uncle's, I had been so completely unprovided with money, that I had not now enough even to renew my wardrobe, though the winter was approaching, when such a renewal would be indispensable. It was necessary, therefore, that I should replenish my purse, however scantily. What I did earn sufficed for my clothing. But it would not have paid my board.

How weary I often was. Sewing, which is such a sedative to many of my sex, was never such to me. It had always, on the contrary, been a task. My eyes ached, my chest pained me, my spirits sank, as I sat, hour after hour, plying my needle. But I never complained, for I did not wish Georgiana to know how much I

suffered, especially as I saw, day by day, her own increasing unhappiness.

I could have endured all, I repeat, if I had been certain, beyond controversy, that I was right. More than once, I saw Mr. Talbot's name mentioned in the newspapers, as having won some important case, or made some eloquent speech. I felt then how I loved him yet! Loved him, I said to myself, in spite of his injustice. But had he, I always added, been unjust? Alas! this doubt was hardest of all to bear. I could have suffered everything, if certain I was a martyr for the truth; but I grew daily less sure of this, and daily, yes, hourly, more miserable.

CHAPTER XIV.

BUT I am anticipating. That night, Mr. Despencer returned home, in a comparatively good-humor; and poor Georgiana's spirits rose accordingly. From this time out, her smiles or tears fluctuated with her husband's temper; and alas! for her, he was oftener angry than otherwise. The mild, thorough-bred manner, which had been his only recommendation to me at the sea-shore, was accompanied by a passionate disposition, which he gave full vent to at his own fireside. My blood often boiled at his treatment of my cousin. Why is it that so many men, famed in society for their courtesy, and even chivalry to women, are little better than brutes to their wives?

Mr. Bentley did not visit us again for several days. I was not more pleased with him, at his second appearance, than at his first. There was a coarse, animal look about the mouth, which made you forget even his fine eyes; and they were fine, of that purplish black which is at once so rare and beautiful. He had glittering white teeth, which a perpetual smile constantly exhibited, and which, to me at least, were suggestive of a latent snarl, as if he was a human hyena. Yet he was handsome and well-bred, in the ordinary sense of the term. In a promiscuous assembly of young ladies, at least half would have pronounced him a "love of a man."

"You don't seem to like Mr. Bentley," said Georgiana, the next day when we were alone. "Yet he is said to be very successful with women."

"Who is he?" was my reply.

"Mr. Bentley," said Georgiana.

"I want to know what he is."

"Don't you know?"

"No."

"Arthur says he is a gentleman, who has been unfortunate."

"Do you believe it?" and I looked at her keenly.

"I sometimes think he may be a gambler, or some such thing," she answered, a little embarrassed. "He don't act the real gentleman, now does he, Maggy?"

"I don't think he does."

"He hasn't the manner of Arthur. Few have."

"No. He hasn't Mr. Despencer's manner."

"I sometimes wish Arthur was not so intimate with him. I wonder if they ever play."

"I hope not," I said, for I saw how distressed the idea made her; and to divert her thoughts, I added, "By-the-bye, where does Mr. Bentley sleep, when he comes here?"

Georgiana laughed. I had not heard her laugh so gleefully since she was a child.

"I'm sure I don't know. I'm keeping house, and don't know where my guests sleep—isn't it funny? Arthur told me, I remember now, not to trouble myself about it, for that old Jane would settle it all: and I never did trouble myself." And she laughed again.

The conversation ceased here, but as we sat at the tea-table, that night, Georgiana suddenly looked up, and said to Mr. Despencer,

"Arthur, where does Mr. Bentley sleep, when he comes here?"

Her husband had his cup raised to his lips, in the very act of drinking. He paused, and looked keenly at me, as if divining where the question originated.

"You don't answer me," said Georgiana. "And why do you stare so at Maggy?"

"Excuse me. I had not heard you. I wasn't aware I was staring at anybody. What was it you asked?"

I knew well enough that he had heard her. But Georgiana, completely deceived, repeated the question.

"Oh! in the front garret to be sure," he answered, promptly. "Old Jane has the back one, you know."

But I had been in the front garret, the morning after Mr. Bentley's first visit, and there was not an article of furniture in it, nor did it look as if anybody had slept on the floor. A temporary couch, however, might have been arranged, and removed before I saw the room. Yet I half believed that the whole was an invention of Mr. Despencer's, and that he had paused to get time to think what to say. I was entirely convinced of this, the day after this conversation, for, when I stole up to the garret, drawn thither by noises I had heard after I retired, I found that a bedstead, and a few other articles of chamber fur-

niture, had been arranged there; and as I recognized one or two of the chairs, which I had seen in Georgiana's room, I knew that Mr. Despencer, to blind me, had caused the apartment to be fitted up.

But why should he blind me? Why was there any necessity for a mystery? My thoughts reverted to the closed chamber. But even if that was where Mr. Bentley slept, why should there be any attempt to conceal it? What was the tie between him and Georgiana's husband? It was more than mere friendship, I felt assured. Did they share some dark and terrible secret together, with which, in some way, the closed chamber was connected?

I had resided with Georgiana about four months, when Mr. Despencer said, one evening, that he had to visit a neighboring city, and would be gone for a week.

"I would like to take you, Georgy," he said, addressing his wife, "if Miss Gray will keep house while we're gone."

"Oh! I should be delighted," said my cousin, for, poor child! any kindness from her husband almost set her wild.

I thought immediately of Mr. Bentley, for he had been so marked in his attentions lately, and was so deficient, I believed, in a nice sense of propriety, that I feared he would take advantage of this absence to annoy me more than ever. But I hesitated to mention this, my only objection to the proposed arrangement, for I saw how disappointed Georgiana would be.

"May we count on your keeping house, then?" said Mr. Despencer.

I still hesitated, but an appealing look from Georgiana decided me, and I answered in the affirmative. I never saw a happier being than my cousin was, for the rest of that evening.

The next day, when Mr. Despencer had departed to the city, I frankly told Georgiana, she would oblige me, if Mr. Despencer would hint to his friend, that, during their absence, he should dispense with his visits to the mansion.

"Your husband can do it in a way to avoid offence," I said, in conclusion, "and I don't want to offend any of his friends."

Georgiana promised, but added,

"You don't seem to like Mr. Bentley any better, I'm sorry to see."

"Do you like him better?"

She looked confused. I saw her husband had been talking her over.

"Oh! yes. Arthur assures me, on his honor, that they never play; and Mr. Bentley is really very handsome and very polite."

I made no answer. Georgiana went on.

"I wish, Maggy, you wouldn't be so prejudiced. Arthur says Mr. Bentley is desperately in love with you, and that you really treat him cruelly sometimes."

My first impulse was to resent these words. What right had Mr. Despencer to say I treated his visitor cruelly? What right had he to permit me to be annoyed by attentions I disliked? What right had he to talk over Georgiana? But I reflected how foolish it would be to get angry at my cousin, for it was in her nature to be controlled by her husband. Poor thing! she needed pity more than she deserved anger.

"We will not talk of this, to-day, my dear. But promise to speak to Mr. Despencer about his friend's visits while you are away."

Georgiana saw I had been hurt. She came up and kissed me affectionately.

"Forgive me, Maggy," she said, "Mr. Bentley shan't trouble you."

The next day they left. I watched the carriage, that bore away Georgiana, till it was out of sight: and then re-entered the house, sadly. For my cousin was now the only one left to love me; in all the world I had no other friend; and her departure made me inexpressibly lonely. The old stone mansion, with its decaying out-houses, looked drearier and more desolate than ever.

CHAPTER XV.

WHEN I rose, the next morning, the sky was overcast. The bare, wintry landscape, with low, leaden-colored clouds massed above it; the rising wind that moaned and wailed through the pines; the gusts of rain that began to sweep past: all these increased my depression of spirits. There are times, when the aspects of Nature affect us, as if they were a part of ourselves: and this was one of them. Besides, I had always been peculiarly sensitive to such impressions. A mountain stirred my soul with solemn and grand emotions. A quiet Sabbath in the country soothed me with a peace inexpressible. Often, in childhood, as I heard the midnight rain dashing against the casements, I had drawn the bed-clothes over my face, with a shudder, fancying that skeleton fingers were tapping on the window-panes, without, for admittance.

As the day wore on, the storm increased, and my depression of spirits with it. I tried to forget myself with my needle. But this only jaded my nervous system and made me more depressed than ever. I rose and walked the room. The evening was now setting in; the rain rushed down in torrents; the wind had increased to a gale. My footsteps quickened, in sympathy with

the tumult without, as I hurried from side to side of the room.

My fire had died low. Its dim light left deep shadows in the corners of the room, from which I almost expected to see weird faces and forms emerge. I did not dare to stop walking. Once I tried to do it, but my flesh began to creep, and my knees to tremble, as if an invisible presence only waited my stopping to clutch me with its spectral hands. Some of my readers, perhaps, may have felt, at times, like I did. If so, they know the horror of such sensations. To others it would be in vain to describe them. They became so intolerable, at last, that I seized my candle, and sought the company of old Jane, in the kitchen, under the pretence of getting a light.

She was sitting crouching over the fire, with crooked, skinny fingers, occasionally rubbing her hands feebly together. She also had neglected to light her candle, and the lurid glare of the smouldering coals, reflected on her brown and withered face, gave her an aspect more witch-like than ever. I told my errand, half apologetically. She did not rise to get the matches, but pointed silently to where they were. I lit my candle, but still lingered.

"My fire is almost out," I said, at last, putting down my candle, and drawing a stool to the hearth, "and it's not worth while to make it up again to-night, so I will sit here till bed time."

She moved slightly to give me more room, and said something about its being a rainy night. There was a long silence, which I broke, at last, by saying,

"You'll think I am going to ask an odd question. But where did Mr. Bentley sleep, the first night I came here?"

She did not pause an instant, nor even look up, but answered, as she held her fingers to the fire,

"At the tavern, below here: a quarter of a mile, or so, off."

The explanation was so natural, that I gave credit to it immediately, wondering I had never thought of this simple explanation before. Yet I asked myself, at the same time, why Mr. Despencer had attempted to deceive me.

Old Jane looked up at my silence, and seeing surprise in my face, continued,

"The master don't want mistress to know it, and that's why you never heard of it. You see, he didn't expect you, the night he brought Mr. Bentley here for the first time, and Mr. Bentley was to have had your room. But when the master saw how it was, he came and told me to tell the mistress, if she asked, that Mr. Bentley had slept in the garret."

"Which was afterward fitted up for him."

"Yes! But," and she looked at me searchingly, "you seem curious about this matter."

"Somehow I had got the idea that Mr. Bentley slept in the room next to the old dining-hall."

"I'd like to see the man who'd sleep there." She said this in such a low, horror-struck tone, looking around fearfully, that my blood suddenly ran cold.

"Why?" I asked, after a moment, in a voice as hushed.

"Have you never heard?"

"I have heard nothing."

"I knew the mistress had never been told, but I supposed the master might have told you, for you don't seem afraid of anything. But the mistress, she wouldn't live in the house a day, if she knew it—that she wouldn't."

These words, but the manner of the speaker still more, convinced me that some fearful tragedy was associated with this old mansion. I remembered what my instinctive feeling, on first seeing it, had been. With some difficulty I drew from the servant the following recital.

"Thirty years ago, long before you were born, Miss, this house, with acres and acres of land hereabouts, belonged to a family by the name of Lyttleton. The master was a widower, a harsh, miserly man, who saw no company, kept but two servants, and never forgave a debt. His sole delight was to add farm after farm to his property. His father had been a spendthrift, and nearly ruined the family: and this was why the son was so greedy after money, it was said.

"This miser had also a son, but the boy had been away from home, for ten years or more, first at school and then at college. He was about nineteen when he came back to live here. His extravagance was an almost daily cause of quarreling between the old man and himself. Yet he wasn't extravagant for one as rich as he was, if what the neighbors said was true. He wanted to keep a horse; but his father wouldn't let him; and many and many a time high words were heard between them about it. So the young man, as he couldn't be happy at home, took to spending his days away, sometimes in the city, sometimes in places about the country. The town wasn't more than a quarter as big, then, as it is now, and when you got out here, you'd think it was fifty miles away. There was gunning, then times in the woods, and fish to be caught in the creeks; and young Mr. Lyttleton was fond of gunning and fishing both.

"That happened, which often happens. One day, in the spring of the year, while fishing, he

stopped at a little farm house, a few miles farther in the country, to ask for a glass of milk. The farmer's wife was a pleasant spoken woman, and knew who he was; and she asked him into her company parlor, and sent her daughter for the milk. The daughter, they all say, was the prettiest girl about. She came in blushing, and looking down; her lashes were the longest and blackest ever seen; but after she had given him the glass, and while he was drinking, she stole a glance at him, which he caught; and this made her blush more than ever. He used to tell, afterward, that such eyes he had never even dreamed of; and he fell in love at first sight.

"When a young man, only nineteen, is unhappy at home, and finds a house where he is always welcome, and where there is a handsome girl he is in love with, he don't stay away from that house many days in the week. So young Mr. Lyttleton kept a going and going, till the neighborhood began to talk about it, and at last it came to the ears of his father. There was a bigger quarrel than ever, you may be sure. The old man had always meant his son to marry rich, and was furious to hear he had promised himself to a girl, whose father hired the farm he worked. But the son wouldn't give in, no! not an inch. The Lyttletons had always liked to have their own way, father and son, ever since they'd been a family. They were a cruel, desperate set, in the old times, it was said, and had made their money by going a pirating, buccaneering it was called, I believe. The first one, that came to this country, had been captain of a ship that plundered and burned a town, away down in the Indies somewhere, and brought away thousands and thousands of dollars, besides silver and gold vessels from churches; and for doing this last some people said there'd been a curse on the family ever since. He had brought away, too, a Spanish girl, a great heiress in her own country, whom he forced to marry him, thinking to get her money. But her father and mother had been killed, some said by him, when the town was taken; and her relations wouldn't part with a penny to a heretic, as they called him; and the king and Pope both took their parts; and so, though he sent agent after agent, for he didn't dare to go himself, he never got a dollar. This is what people say, but I don't know if it's all true, though nobody denies, I believe, that he treated his wife cruelly, and that she died of a broken-heart. This brought another curse on the family, so the story goes.

"At any rate, they were a bad set enough, gamblers, horse-jockeys, wicked husbands and unnatural fathers, stern, harsh, passionate men,

whom nobody loved, but everybody feared. They always would, as I've said, have their own way. So when the father and son quarreled about this marriage it was terrible. Nobody, for awhile, could be got to live with them, as servants; for each made them the victims of his anger. The oaths, which that parlor heard, where you've been sitting all day, were enough, I've been told, to make devils haunt it till the Day of Judgment."

As she spoke, she glanced fearfully over her shoulder, in the direction of the parlor; and a shiver ran through all my veins. No wonder such an awe and dread had come over me in the gathering twilight in that room.

"How it came to be settled at last, in the way it was, nobody, at first, could tell. But they supposed that father and son had worn each other out, and that so they came to patch up a peace between them. It was agreed that the son should go abroad for two years; that the girl should be sent to school and educated; and that, when he was twenty-one, the son should come back and marry her. One reason, it was thought, why the father gave in, was that this house, and all the original property, was entailed, as they call it, so that the son would get it, at his death, whether or no: and this fact made the son more stubborn too, for he laughed when his father said he'd leave him penniless, and boasted he could live, till then, on the Jews. But the real reason, I reckon, why the father made this bargain, was to get the son out of the way, thinking, that, before two years, he'd forget the girl.

"He did not forget her, however. The Lyttletons always stuck to whatever they undertook. If they hated you, they never let you up. If they went into politics, or took to horse-racing, they held on forever. It had been part of the bargain, that the young man, for the whole of these two years, shouldn't write to the girl. No he did be. But he heard about her, from time to time, from a friend, and was waiting eagerly for the two years to be up, that he might come back and marry her, when this friend suddenly wrote to him that his father had got the start of him and married the girl himself.

"It seemed, for all this afterward came out, that the girl had never really cared for the young man. She was one of those vain, empty creatures, who can marry anybody, provided they get plenty of finery. Her father and mother thought of nothing but money. They had done all they could to get up a match between her and young Mr. Lyttleton, but when they found he had gone away, they tried as hard to make

a match between the father and her, and succeeded. The old man was not too old to be blind to beauty: no Lyttleton, they say, ever was. Besides, he saw the girl actually courting him, and thought what a revenge he might have on his son. So they were married. It was all done so quick, during one of the girl's vacations, that the friend of young Mr. Lyttleton had no time to warn him.

"The young man came home by the next packet. He was crazy with rage, they say, in Europe, and for most of the way back. Then he settled down into a gloomy silence, which was even more terrible to see. Voyages were longer then than they are now, and for the last half of the voyage he walked the deck, his hands behind him, darkly looking down, and never hearing a word if one spoke to him. The captain, who had heard something of the story, said there was danger in his eye, and was going to warn old Mr. Lyttleton, but was prevented, and so the dreadful tragedy came about."

This long prelude to the denouement, these pictures of the passionate, self-willed, desperate race of Lyttletons, had prepared me for something awful; but when the narrator hinted at parricide, the crime exceeded even my expectations, and I felt my flesh creep with horror, especially as I remembered the room, which had been closed for twenty years, and which I foresaw must have been the scene of the bloody deed, and reflected how near it was. Old Jane seemed to have something of the same feeling, for her voice, which had gradually become raised, in the excitement of the story, sank again to a whisper; and more than once she glanced suspiciously around.

"He was prevented, because, when the ship got to the wharf, it was almost night and raining fast. Young Lyttleton did not wait for the vessel to be made fast, but slipped down the sides by a rope, and was off before he was missed. The captain, as soon as he found himself at leisure, looked around for his passenger, but seeing he was gone, and that the night was stormy, gave himself no more trouble about it, though he would have been too late, even if he had started at once.

"For the young man, the moment he set foot on shore, had hired a coach. He got out to the house about nine o'clock. This is about the time of the night, I suppose, and the storm was just such another. The windows rattled; the rain rushed down on the roof; the pine trees tossed and groaned; and the gale went shrieking, away over the fields, I've been told, as if the graveyard, by the old church above here, had been

emptied, and the ghosts were howling by. In the middle of this storm, the son, who had left the carriage at the turn of the road below, reached the door and knocked——”

She stopped suddenly, for distinct and loud, above the tempest, came three or four knocks on the front door. Her brown cheek changed to livid, and, as the knocks were repeated, one, two, three, four, she clutched at my arm, holding it as if in the grip of a vice, and trembling all over.

“Hark!” she said, in a whisper scarcely audible.

The antecedents of her story, the story itself, the breathless crisis at which she had arrived, these had all conspired to make me, at this interruption, start also with a feeling as if supernatural presences were about to enter on the scene. But a moment's reflection brought my courage back to me. Though my blood ran chill with a nameless horror, my reasoning faculties did not desert me. Intellectually, I had always been skeptical as to such visitations. I rose, therefore, resolute to go to the door.

“Don't,” gasped old Jane. It was all she could say. But she held me back, with the clutch of a giantess.

But the blood of the old Norsemen, which ran so blue in my veins, and to which something of my awe of the invisible world may have been attributable, was mounting higher and hotter, with every moment, to face down this peril: mounting higher and hotter because the peril was one, which, at first, my nerves shrank from.

“No,” I said, wrenching myself loose, with a sudden exertion of strength, of which I had not supposed myself capable. “Man, or fiend, I will see what it is.”

I snatched the candle, as I spoke, and rushed out of the kitchen, not giving myself time to reflect. In a moment, I was at the door, had set the candle on a chair, and was unfastening the huge bar which defended the entrance. In another moment, I had flung the door wide open.

What was it, a sheeted form, or the flash of the candle into the gloom, the gibbering of a frightened ghost, or the unearthly cry of the wind, that met my eye, that startled my ears, as the heavy hinges rolled back? Whatever it was, it was gone in an instant. A gust had put out my candle, and I was in the dark, with the rain drifting against my face. Nothing was to be seen, nothing heard without, but the tempest.

I will not pretend to analyze my feelings at this juncture. I felt that no mortal being had knocked. Had I alone heard the sounds, I should have thought that my imagination, worked upon

by old Jane's story, had played me false. But the servant also had heard them. That two persons should be deceived, in the same manner, was hardly possible. Yet my courage did not give way. I felt cold as ice; my knees and hands trembled; but I stood my ground nevertheless, and carefully shut and barred the door, though it was too dark to see. I next recovered my candle. Then, but not till then, I turned to go. Up to this point, in spite of all, I had been calm, and comparatively slow in my movements; for I had been facing the danger. But now I could scarcely restrain myself from running. I felt as if spectral arms might be thrown around me at any moment. I breathed hard and quick. And yet I would not increase my speed, but walked steadily on, groping my way, for what seemed an age, till I reached the welcome door of the kitchen, opened it, and stood within its warm and cheery light.

CHAPTER XVI.

I STAGGERED to my seat, with a face as white as ashes. Old Jane rose up and stood over me, more moved even than myself.

“God help us, she would go,” she said, speaking as if to herself, “she has seen a ghost.”

“No, I have seen no ghost,” I replied, recovering myself. “We deceived ourselves, that is all.”

“Do you mean to say there was nobody at the door?”

“There was nobody. You were telling of young Lyttleton's return, and how he knocked, and our imaginations carried us away. The wind put out my candle. Go on with the story.”

My composure reassured her, and after awhile she resumed her tale, though apparently not without misgivings that we would be again interrupted, for she often glanced fearfully around.

“The room, which has been shut up so long, was the library, and here the father was sitting, poring over some title-deeds, when the son knocked at the door. The bride had gone to bed, wearied out with the loneliness of this old house, on a rainy day in winter. A servant let in her young master, but was so frightened at his sudden return, and at his ghastly look, that she dropped her candle and did not see which way he went. Loud, angry voices in the library soon told, however, where the son had sought and found his father. What passed between them, at first, no one knows. Their voices were heard in furious strife, every other word an oath, and the servants, terror-struck, gathered in the hall; but no one dared to interfere. Then

followed a scuffling, as if a deadly struggle had been joined, and, at this juncture, when the servants were urging each other to enter the room, but no one ventured to take the lead, there was a quick gasp and a heavy fall on the floor, followed, the moment after, by the appearance of the bride, who, frightened by the tumult, and recognizing her first lover's voice in it, had lost all presence of mind and rushed into the very scene she should have avoided. She passed the servants, huddled together at the foot of the stairs, like a flash of sudden lightning, her night-dress streaming wildly, her hair disheveled, her feet unslipped. One of the servants plucked courage and followed her in, foreboding that something awful had taken place, and that worse might happen in consequence of her presence.

"The library door had been open, during all this time, and the light streaming out across the hall. The servant, who followed her, saw her flit past into this gush of light, and then lost sight of her for a moment. When she next beheld her, she had reached the middle of the room, where the library table stood, and was standing, as if frozen to stone by horror. What she saw told its own tale. The father and son, in their rage, had grappled, and the latter, finding the old man too strong for him, had snatched a Turkish dagger, which lay on the table, and which had been used for a paper cutter, and plunged it into his enemy's heart. He had just drawn out the blade, and was holding it up to the light, dripping with blood, a wild, maniacal glare of exultation in his eyes, when his step-mother, once his promised wife, entered. Her sudden cry of horror, as she stopped at the end of the table, aroused his attention; he recognized her, uttered a cry like a wild beast, and sprang upon her. It was all over in a second. Before the servant had got three steps into the room, the body of his victim fell heavily to the floor, and he was standing over it, laughing savagely, and shaking the dagger on high.

"The servant turned and fled, shutting the door behind her, nor was it till aid was had, and the men were all armed, that the library was entered again. For a long time all had been still inside of it. When the door was opened, the two murdered bodies were seen lying where they had fallen. On the other side of the table, with the dagger still sticking in his breast, was the lifeless form of the maniacal son."

Old Jane, at these words, sank into silence, and for some time looked steadily in the fire. I did the same. To have uttered a syllable, to have glanced around the room, would have been impossible, till the feeling of horror, conjured

up by this awful tale, had, in some measure, subsided. At last the narrator resumed, but without removing her eyes from the now fast smouldering coals.

"After the funeral, the library was locked up. The property went to distant heirs, who sold off the farms one by one, and would have sold the mansion also, but nobody would buy it. For, from that hour, people said the house was haunted. On stormy nights in winter, like that when the parricide was committed, noises as of two men engaged in a deadly scuffle, it was whispered about, were heard in the library; lights shone from the tightly shut windows; the shriek of a woman was heard; a white form was seen flitting about; groans and death screams filled the air. So everybody avoided the place. None of the servants would stay, except the one who had followed her mistress into the room, and she was left, at last, in charge of the house. Things went fast to decay. I believe it was never let, though that was often tried, till Mr. Despencer hired it, about six months ago."

As she concluded, she rose and began to cover up the fire. Then she replaced my candle, which had been nearly consumed; lit another for herself, and led the way up stairs. I followed her, casting a furtive glance, as we entered the hall, in the direction of the library door; for I half expected to see the portal fly open and sheeted ghosts appear. When I reached my chamber, I laid my hand on her arm, to detain her for a moment.

"How did you know all this?" I said.

She paused a second, the light of both candles shining on her withered face, and answered, with a look I shall never forget,

"Forty years and more I have lived in this house. Young Mr. Lyttleton was my foster-child. I was the friend who sent him word that his father had married his bride. It was I that followed his step-mother into the library. Do you think that anything else could tempt me to live here? Or that, being all this, I could go away?"

I retired, but not to sleep. My brain was too excited. I lay, listening to the wind and rain, and fancying, at times, that I heard scufflings, death-falls, shrieks, unearthly laughter, every accompaniment of the tragedy of which I had just been told. The delusion frequently was so strong that I sat up in bed to listen more intently. But at last nature gave way, and I sank exhausted into sleep.

I cannot tell how long I was unconscious. I was awake, suddenly, by a loud sound, like the fall of a heavy body, that seemed to come from

the direction of the library. I listened, half incredulous. I even pinched myself to be sure that I was not dreaming. But there was no mistaking the fact of the noise, or rather of a succession of noises, such as angry voices, scufflings, with a heavy, dead fall at the last. A chill of horror, similar to that which had come over me at the front door, ran through my veins. I recalled the strange knocking, and said to myself, with a sensation of almost mortal terror, that modern science was wrong, and that disembodied spirits were permitted, as our forefathers had believed, to haunt the scenes of their earthly misdeeds. But these feelings did not continue long. My natural courage again rallied to my aid, and I resolved trying, as I had earlier in the evening, to solve the mystery. Perhaps, I reflected, I might be able to discover a rational solution for the strange event that happened then, as also for the noises I now heard. If not; if beings of another world really were abroad: how could I come to harm; for I was innocent? I would trust in God: I would go forward.

Thus reassured, I rose and began to dress, first having lit my candle. But my fingers trembled in spite of my reasonings. My heart beat fast, when, having finished my hasty toilet, I took up the candle-stick and approached the door. Just as I turned the key, the strange sounds were heard again, now more distinct than ever. I felt certain I detected two different voices, rising, every now and then, over the noise of the scuffling. I began to be suddenly faint, and was compelled to sit down, for a space, on a chair by the door.

But I soon grew ashamed of my weakness. In spite of the evidence of my senses, the intellectual part of me kept reasserting that there must be a natural solution for this mystery, and that I had only to be bold in order to see these chimeras of my imagination fly away, as the ghost in the grave-yard fades into a white monument on being resolutely approached. So, when I had recovered breath, I rose again, unlocked the door and stepped out.

All was dark and silent in the hall. The rain beat against the casement at the end of the passage, the wind wailed and sobbed around the house, the great pines moaned; but everything, in the direction of the library, was hushed and quiet. I began now to realize how foolish I had been. I must have become so excited, I said to myself, by the narrative of old Jane, that my imagination had persuaded me its fancies were actual sounds. My spirits rose, with this conviction, and I advanced boldly down the staircase.

There was a broad landing, as usual in mansions of a similar character, about one-third of the way down. I had gained this, had turned to descend the last flight, and had gone a few steps, when suddenly the library door swung open on its hinges, and a gush of light streamed out, filling all around with a radiance as vivid as that of noon-day. Looking over my left shoulder, I could see, for a little way, into the library; and I stopped and gazed, for a full minute, as if compelled to do so by some weird power, yet so appalled that the perspiration started out on my forehead in great drops. There was nothing visible, however, except the dazzling effulgence which flooded the room, penetrating into every nook and corner which was visible to my sight. Directly a cold wind began to blow across me, from the haunted room; a wind like that which comes out of a vast charnel-house, that has long been shut up; and it went like an ice-bolt to my heart. My candle was extinguished by it, in an instant. Then followed a low, prolonged wail, that was succeeded by scufflings, angry voices, sounds of blows, and the fall of a human body. I felt as if, the next moment, sheeted spectres would come rushing out. In imagination their death-cold fingers were already upon me. I tried to shriek, but could not. Terror had froze my tongue. In the consciousness of my inability to give the alarm, my senses began to desert me; I knew I was reeling, and clutching mechanically at the balustrade to prevent myself from falling, I made a last desperate effort to scream. Only a stifled mumbling came forth, but it was one pregnant with horror. Instantly the library door banged to, and I was left in darkness, cowering on the steps, and holding fast to the banisters, while I shook as if in a fit.

I can hardly tell how I regained my chamber. Nor do I remember what I did there for the next five or ten minutes. I believe I remained on the bed, where I had sunk, lying in a sort of half-doze. Gradually I began to recover my faculties. I sat up and listened: at first fearfully, then with more courage. At last I summoned resolution sufficient to light my other candle, for the one I taken with me had dropped from my hands when I fell and was left on the stairs. The thought now suggested itself to descend to the library door and knock for admittance. But a cold shuddering ran over me, at the idea, and I glanced around half-expecting to see spectres advance from out of the shadows of the furniture. So I began, noiselessly, to divest myself of my clothing, and leaving my candle burning, I crept silently into bed.

There I lay listening, for more than an hour. Weird sounds of wind and rain came to my straining ears continually; but no unearthly ones, such as I had heard before. At last I fell into a doze, from which I was partially aroused by the parlor clock striking the hour of four or five, I could not tell which. I only remember the silvery sound, ringing through the hushed house, and that, as I tried to count the strokes, I dropped off again into sleep, completely exhausted.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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THE OLD STONE MANSION.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON, AUTHOR OF "THE VALLEY FARM," "MABEL," "KATE AYLESFORD," &c.

[Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1859, by Charles J. Peterson, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, in and for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.]

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CHAPTER XVII.

A BRIGHT, blue sky; a bracing, north-west wind; a flood of brilliant sunshine streaming in, as I threw open my window, welcomed me, when I awoke, the next day. The events of the night seemed to me incredible, in the presence of this glad, exhilarating morning; and I had half persuaded myself that a dream had deceived me, till I looked for my candle-stick and found it missing. As it was yet early, and I had not heard old Jane stirring, I opened my door and descended to the first landing, to see if the light was still where it had fallen. It was there: and I returned to my room, more bewildered than ever.

I breakfasted in nervous silence, though old Jane, who waited at table, seemed, more than once, inclined to talk. For I did not care, that my companion should know my feelings, or hear how my rest had been disturbed.

After the meal was finished, I took some work, which I had completed, the day before, and set forth for the city; for I felt I could not stay alone in the house, that day. My nervous system, after the exhausting events of the night before, required recuperation. In vain old Jane assured me that the roads would be impassible with mud, and that I would be chilled through; I put on overshoes, wrapped my shawl tighter around me, and started.

The brisk walk, the sharp air, the gay sunshine restored my spirits. By the time I had discharged my errand, I was almost ready to smile at what I now half believed the illusions of the night before. As the day was still early, I resolved to prolong my walk. I turned into the principal thoroughfare, which was now alive with pedestrians, for it was the fashionable hour for promenading, and drawing my veil closely over my face, so as not to be recognized by those who had known me under happier auspices, I followed the tide of human life.

I had not gone far, before, suddenly, I saw Rosalie approaching, with her nurse.

Dear Rosalie! Since the day I left her father's house, we had not met. How delighted I was to

see her now. I threw aside my veil, careless who recognized me now, and rushed up to her.

But the nurse drew her back, with a quick gesture, interposing her fat, coarse person between me and my darling.

"No, Miss! And I wonder you're the impudence. My orders is positive not to let Rosy speak to you."

I could not, for a moment, believe her words. Was this the creature, who, for the last year, but especially after my engagement to Mr. Talbot, had been so fawning? I stood bewildered and incredulous, my arms half extended to clasp Rosalie, in the attitude in which the nurse's words had arrested me. Rosalie, meantime, looked first at the nurse, and then wistfully at me, from behind the creature's back. She would have run to me, if she had been able to break loose. At first, I was tempted to encourage her in doing so; for oh! how I longed to take her in my arms, to feel her little cheeks once more resting against my own. But a second thought changed this half formed resolution. My better nature came to my aid. I could not, I said to myself, teach her disobedience. If her parents had interdicted her speaking to me, I would submit, for her sake, cruel as the decree was. But my eyes filled with tears.

"Good-bye, darling," I said, "if papa and mamma say you mustn't speak to me, don't do it. Be a good girl, and wait for better times. God bless you!"

I turned away, as I pronounced these last words, for my voice was choking. Dropping my veil again, I walked on, for a block or two, the tears falling so fast I could hardly see my way.

For nothing, since that fatal day, when I had left my uncle's house, had cut me to the heart so much as this. "To think," I said to myself, as I hurried on, "that they will set even Rosalie against me; that, in time, even she will learn to hate me!"

But the trials of the day were not yet over. I had now reached the most fashionable part of the city, having unconsciously gone farther than

I had intended. Wide, handsome mansions, built of brown stone, lined either side of the stately street. Here and there, from amid damask and lace curtains, looked out, through thick, plate glass, lovely faces. Rare, hot-house plants ornamented many of the windows. Splendid equipages, with pawing horses and fat, stately-looking negro coachmen, stood before the doors, or rolled up and down the wide thoroughfare.

Suddenly, the massive portal of a house, just before me, was thrown open, by the obsequious waiter, and a gentleman and lady emerged. My heart beat quick, for I recognized, in the gentleman, Mr. Talbot.

His face was slightly turned away, as he addressed his companion, so that he did not observe me, but I beheld enough of it to see that there were no traces of suffering there. And why should there be? I said to myself bitterly. He was rich, he was distinguished, he was still happy; and the separation, which, in spite of my pride, was thinning my cheek, had left no trace upon him.

He gave his hand to the lady. As he did so, she turned, smiling and blushing toward him, and I caught sight, for an instant, of her countenance. It was very beautiful. As I saw the bright, blue, laughing eyes; the golden hair; the brilliant complexion; the high-bred air, a sudden pang of jealousy shot through me. It was a sensation I had never experienced before. In the worst hours of my loneliness and sorrow, when I said to myself that I should never see Mr. Talbot again, and when I had often thought of the possibility of his marrying, I had never, I now felt, realized what the reality would be, when he came to love another. But I was deceived no longer. I discovered, too, how much hope I had unconsciously entertained, and how much that hope had buoyed me up. Oh! if I could have sunk down, and died there, and so forgotten it all, how happy I would have been.

I trembled lest Mr. Talbot might see and recognize me. Fortunately I was still several yards off; and I slackened my pace and drew the folds of my veil still tighter. With inexpressible relief I saw him descend the steps, cross the pavement, and hand his companion into the light, trotting wagon, which stood awaiting them, without looking in my direction. In another moment, he had taken the reins from the groom, had leaped to the seat, and drawn the costly furs up over her lap and his. Then, with a quick, sharp word to the horses, a span of beautiful blood-bays, away dashed the light carriage, the groom and waiter standing mute and admiring, to look after them.

I watched them also. A spell was on me that I could not resist, and it would have been impossible for me to do otherwise, painful as the spectacle was. What a contrast between the bold driver and his slightly timid companion! She was all womanly grace, he all masculine strength. The bright colors of her bonnet and India shawl; the plume that streamed behind her; the air of indescribable dependence, which pervaded her whole figure, as she nestled toward him; the quick, resolute manner in which he pulled up one of the horses that shied from sheer excess of spirits; the idea of strength and self-poised massiveness of character, with which the grave hue of his dress harmonized so well: all these made up a picture, which haunted me for months subsequently. I noticed also the beauty of the horses, with a sensation, half of admiration, half of envy. How satin-like their coats; how delicate their ears; how broad their forehead; how intelligent their eyes; how full their nostrils! In every detail, as well as in the exquisite symmetry of their forms, I saw the unstained lineage, that could go back to "the blood of the desert." For I was born with a love for all animal life, and especially for beautiful horses, the noblest of animals. So I followed the mettled steeds, with my eyes, far up the street, till they were wheeled suddenly. Then I saw them, for an instant, tossing their heads and snapping at each other; and the next moment, they vanished, with their burden, down a cross street.

Anger now came to my aid. Up to this moment, I had been spell-bound. While that carriage was in sight I could not think, I could only gaze, gaze in a sort of bewildered amazement. But now a sense of injustice stung me to almost madness. I said to myself that Mr. Talbot had never loved me as I had loved him, or he could not have so utterly forgotten me so soon. My woman's pride rose in arms. My anger against him was only less hot than that which I felt against his companion, for I looked on her—yes! I will confess it, morbid as it shows me to have been—as even more culpable than himself.

I found myself, late in that day, at the old stone mansion, but how I got there it would be impossible for me to recall. There was a blank through the long hours of that day, which has left nothing to be remembered except a sensation of dull, hopeless pain. I must have returned home mechanically; I am sure it was unconsciously. The first thing that woke me from my stupor was the sound of the wintry wind in the pines before the door; for its melancholy seemed to sympathize with me, and the tears rushed to my eyes. Ashamed lest old Jane should see me,

I hurried up stairs, locked myself in my room, and, when she knocked to announce tea, declined to go down. And for two days, agonies of shame, remorse and indignation racked me by turns, and kept me nearly sleepless.

On the third day Georgiana returned. It had been my intention to seek an opportunity, during old Jane's daily siesta, to force my way into the long-closed library, in order to solve the mystery of the strange light and noise. But the events of the day had driven this design, for the time, from my recollection. It was too late now to make the attempt, for Georgiana would be constantly at home. So I was forced to postpone my determination. But I never, for a long while, passed the haunted apartment, in the dusk of the evening, without a feeling of awe, and often with a shudder. Frequently, at night, I listened again for the unearthly sounds, and occasionally thought I heard them, till opening my chamber door, I found my imagination had deceived me. Gradually the impression of that fearful night wore off, till, months after, it was revived again, as I shall proceed to relate in due season.

CHAPTER XVIII.

As the winter wore on, my cousin's failing health aroused all my sympathies. She had too much pride to confess anything; but the traces of tears were almost continually on her cheek; and I frequently recognized her husband's voice, elevated in anger, after they had retired for the night. Twice I thought I heard what was even worse, blows given and a woman's suppressed scream. Nor was I mistaken. For, a day or two after the last event of this kind, Georgiana happening, inadvertently, to bare her arm, I detected the marks of the blows. I think she saw she had betrayed herself, for she looked confused and covered her arm up quickly.

Several times, during the winter, Georgiana had written to her father; but her letters were returned unopened. Once she had summoned courage to seek an interview with him. I accompanied her, in a hack, to the door. She had chosen an hour when she knew Mr. Elliott would be at home. But her father sternly refused to see her, and when she would have forced her way in, the servant, acting no doubt according to instructions, shut the door in her face. Her look, as she turned to come down the steps, was that of hopeless anguish and despair. She staggered, as if she was about to faint, and would have fallen, I believe, if I had not sprung from the carriage and supported her to her seat.

This constant demand upon my sympathies

was, perhaps, a benefit to me, because it kept me from morbidly dwelling on my own sorrows. After this last vain effort at a reconciliation with her father, Georgiana's melancholy increased, as did also the irritability and harshness of her husband. Up to this time, I suppose, he had nourished a hope that Mr. Elliott would forgive them; and this had been some restraint upon him. But when he saw there was no chance of his wife's inheriting any portion of her father's wealth, he vented on her all his disappointment and rage.

No wonder her health gave way! It might have been thought, by those who knew Georgiana only as a willful girl, that she, at least, would never break her heart for love. But such would have taken a very superficial view of her character. Her failings had been, in a great degree, the result of her training. It is rare that the only child of rich and selfish parents is not petted till it is spoiled. She was still selfish, and often taxed my forbearance severely. She felt, also, acutely the loss of the position to which she had been accompanied, and the want of the luxuries which her father's wealth had given her. But if her husband had really loved her, she might, in time, I believe, have learned to be contented. The conviction that she had sacrificed everything to one who had married her only for her money, and who, now that she was penniless, maltreated her, was more than she could bear. She had not the strength of character to fight an adverse battle of life.

I was not without my own troubles, in addition to the one great sorrow of my life. Mr. Bentley still continued to visit us, and was becoming more marked in his attentions than ever. Often, to escape him, I thought of seeking a home elsewhere, but I knew that my presence was all there was to reconcile Georgiana to her lot. Once, when irritated beyond endurance, I told her that I really could stay no longer in a place where I was subjected to such annoyances.

"I don't blame you, my dear," I said, seeing how distressed she looked. "But Mr. Bentley will take no hints. The more I rebuff him, the more he persists: and I really can't bear it any longer."

Georgiana burst into tears.

"Oh! for my sake, don't go away," she sobbed. "This old house is so lonely that I shall die. Sometimes, I hear such strange noises, at night, that I almost think it's haunted; and I'm beginning to be afraid, indeed I am, to sleep alone, when Arthur's away. You won't go, will you?"

How could I resist such entreaties, especially

when, but for me, she would never, probably, have been the husband of this man? But I said,

"I will stay, then; for awhile, at least."

"Oh! don't say that," she continued, with more tears. "Promise to stay till fall. I won't live longer than that. If it wasn't for another life than mine, I'd be willing to die now. I used to think life was so happy; but now, now——"

She could not go on. I took her to my bosom, and soothed her, poor child! till she sobbed herself into quiet.

But I had reason to repent my promise; and that before long. It was one day, when Arthur, a rare thing with him, had hired a carriage to take Georgiana for a drive.

I was sitting sewing, thinking of the past, and the tears were dropping on my work, when I heard a footstep, and looking up, saw Mr. Bentley before me. He had opened the front door, unannounced, and entered the parlor, without my having been aware of it.

"What! crying, Miss Gray?" he said.

I was vexed to have been detected in this weakness. I made no answer, therefore, but went on with my sewing. No farther tears fell, however; I was too proud for that.

My visitor, not having been asked, as yet, to take a seat, strolled uneasily about. Once or twice, I glanced up, and always caught his eye fixed on me. This, at last, embarrassed me. He took courage now, and drew near to me. At once I divined what his visit signified, and understood why Georgiana had been invited to drive. I rose to leave the room. But it was too late.

I will not repeat what Mr. Bentley said, nor what I replied. It is enough that he tendered me his heart and hand, and that I refused him. My manner was, perhaps, even more curt and decided than my words, for the color rushed over his face as I spoke, and he looked, for an instant, as if he would have liked to annihilate me. But he recovered the mastery of his features immediately.

"You are severe," he said, affecting to be calm. "Perhaps," and there was a malicious, snake-like gleam in his eye, "you still hope that Mr. Talbot will return to you."

He paused, evidently to watch the effect of his words. I felt the blood shoot to my temples. I was angry, the instant after, to think I had betrayed myself; that anger was heightened to see the exultation that sparkled in his look, as he went on,

"Because, if that is your notion," he continued; and he now dropped the elaborate politeness, which, up to this point, he had observed,

"you are laboring under a great delusion. Mr. Talbot was married yesterday."

It went through me like a knife. He was revenged, ay! more than revenged, for any superciliousness in my manner. But I was determined he should not see it. I had betrayed myself once: I would not betray myself again. I took up my needle and held it to the light: I think nobody but a woman could have done as I did; and deliberately began to thread it, saying, unconsciously,

"Ah! You don't say so."

If I am not mistaken, he muttered, not a farewell, but an oath, as he seized his hat and left the house. I watched till I saw he was out of sight, when I threw myself on the sofa and gave way to an agony of tears.

By-and-bye, I bethought me to look at the newspaper, for one was brought to us daily. I sprang up, with a sudden hope, for I felt convinced that Mr. Bentley would stop at no falsehood to gain his end. The marriage, if it had really taken place, would probably be published. With trembling fingers I unfolded the journal and sought the column where marriage notices were inserted. As I hurriedly glanced down it, my spirits rose, but only to be dashed forever, by an announcement near the bottom.

"On the tenth, by the Rev. Dr. Downs, at Christ church, Henry Talbot, of —, to Miss Julia Beverly, only daughter of Charles Beverly, Esq., of this city."

The paper fell from my grasp. I staggered to my seat again. The room seemed suddenly to darken. I gasped for breath. Oh! how sweet oblivion would be, or how sweet we think it would be, in those great crises of agony, which are the fruit life bears for the unhappy. For the dream, the wild, vain, mad dream, as I now felt it to be, was over. Shall I confess it? In spite even of what I had seen, a hope had gradually crept back to my heart—well! it is idle saying what that hope was. I escaped up stairs, as soon as I could, and there, till dinner was nearly ready to be served, fought, despairingly, the grim Appollyon in my heart. But I conquered at last, or, at least, I believed I did.

I have said nothing, in all this time, of the means by which we lived. In spite of my cousin's assertions, that her husband never played, I had come to the conclusion that he supported himself by gambling. Mr. Bentley resembled so much the keeper of a second-rate hell, such as I had heard them described, that I was confident he and Mr. Despencer were

partners in some enterprise of that description. This explained the hold which he had on Georgiana's husband, which otherwise was inexplicable. For the intimacy between the two men had relation, it was plain, to transactions in which both were pecuniarily interested, as I saw money frequently passing between them, account books produced, and receipts exchanged.

I was the more sure that I was right, because the financial condition of Mr. Despencer appeared to fluctuate, precisely as a gambler's will. Sometimes he would produce whole rolls of notes, crisp and fresh from the bank, out of which to give my cousin the funds necessary to discharge household bills. At other times, the bills would be allowed to accumulate for weeks; and any mention of money would make him angry.

All this while, Georgiana remained under the delusion that her husband was an English gentleman of condition, whose purse was full, or empty, according as his remittances from home were punctual, or otherwise. I could less afford than ever to tell her the truth. It would have taken from her the only thing that was left to cheer her spirits.

"Though I will be dead and gone," she would say, for she persisted in declaring she would not live, "my poor infant may yet be rich and happy. I hope it will be a boy, for then he can inherit the title, if it falls in, as Arthur says it is almost sure to do. A daughter might be no happier than her mother."

This was the nearest approach she ever made, in words, to betraying her husband's cruelty. She seemed to see, the moment she had spoken, what she had done, for she became confused and hastily turned the conversation.

The spring was far advanced, when these events occurred. For nearly two months I had not been in the city. During most of that time, the roads had been impassable, in consequence of the heavy rains. At last, late in the month of May, I set forth, at Georgiana's request, to make some purchases, which could not well be put off longer, and which she had been anxious I should make for her, ever since her husband, a few days before, had placed in her hands a tempting roll of bank-bills.

"Buy things that are pretty as well as good, Maggy," she said, "for Arthur tells me times are mending with him, and he's been quite generous, as you'll see when you count the bills."

I was gone all day, for there were many things to buy. I came home quite fagged out. But I was fully compensated for my fatigue, by

the extravagant, almost childish pleasure, which my purchases gave Georgiana. She held up the little, delicate lace caps, blushing, and seemed happier than she had been for months.

It was a beautiful evening, and so warm, that we sat with the windows up. Georgiana was gayer than she had been all winter. The soft, south wind, scented with far-off flowers, and the silver moonlight, which fell around us like a mantle of peace, assisted, doubtless, to work this change. Her husband seemed also to feel the influence of the hour. I thought what Georgiana had said, about his circumstances improving, was, perhaps, true; for not only now, but for several days, he had been less irritable and harsh. As I saw his wife leaning her head fondly on his shoulder, a caress which he did not rudely reject, as he would have done, a week before, I said to myself, that better days, perhaps, were in store for my cousin.

Nor did these hopes die with that evening. For the month and more, that followed, Mr. Despencer was once more attentive, almost kind, to his wife: and she, poor thing! was only too grateful, as her every action and look showed. In the middle of summer she became a mother; and though the child was a daughter, and not a son, she seemed to have forgotten, in the bliss of her new relation, all her former wishes that the result might be different.

CHAPTER XIX.

GEORGIANA had sunk into a soft slumber, one night, and was altogether so well, that, leaving the nurse to watch over her and the infant, I stole out of the chamber in order to seek some rest, of which, for nearly a week, I had been almost entirely deprived. I soon fell into a deep sleep. My system had been completely exhausted by anxiety and the fatigue of watching; and I did not even dream.

I was awake, after some hours, however, by the dash of rain across my face. The day had been sultry, even for the season, and, when I retired, I had left all the windows open, including one at the head of my bed. Sitting up, I felt that my pillow was quite wet, for a thunder-storm had arisen, and a cold wind was driving the rain, in huge drops, right across where I slept. I sprang out, as soon as I realized this, to close the casement. But just as my hand was on the sash, a peal of thunder broke overhead, seeming to shake the house to its foundations, and rattling down the sky, as if the pillars of that gigantic dome had been crashed, and the whole vast superstructure was tumbling back

into chaos. Instantaneously, there was a dazzling flash, which, for one brief moment, revealed the landscape without, clothed in a ghastly radiance, like the spectral and blasted wastes seen in a dream of the lost: the tossing pines on the lawn, every needle a point of light; the swaying woods in the distance, sheeted with electricity; the sullen stream in the valley beneath, emitting a dull blaze; and the pall-like clouds above, rolling tumultuously over each other, glowing a lurid black: and then all was darkness. It was a darkness a thousand times more intense for that moment of vivid light.

My first idea was that the house had been struck, for I found myself, simultaneously with all this, reeling backward against the bed, nor do I know to this day whether I was thrown there by the shock, or whether I instinctively retreated. The darkness was succeeded, almost immediately, by a wild, lurid glare, in which everything, for a moment or two, spun around: the bed, the room, the gloomy landscape without, nay! the heavens themselves. Then followed the sound of the rain rushing downward, like unseen Alpine torrents, when night and tempest are on Mount Blanc.

When I recovered, my first thought was of Georgianna, whom I knew that peril must have awakened, and who, from a child, had been afraid of thunder. So I hurried on my dress, as fast as I could, to go to her.

My cousin's room, as I have said, was next to mine, and on the same floor. But there was no communication between the two apartments, except through the hall, and when I opened the door leading into the latter, I was startled by seeing the passage, which I had left in darkness, an hour or two before, now almost as light as day.

At first I could not believe my eyes. I passed my hand over them, and looked again. I now became aware that the light was brighter below than above, and another look satisfied me that it came from the direction of the library, out of whose long closed door it seemed to stream forth, in a gush of brilliant, almost unearthly effulgence. I forgot, instantly, my errand. The remembrance of that winter night, when I had heard the story of the parricide committed in that room, and seen afterward this same mysterious light, rushed back upon me, with all its feelings of awe and terror. I staggered back into my chamber, my knees trembling, my heart beating wildly.

But I rallied almost immediately. I put my hand on the lock to reopen the door, and while one might have counted fifty, paused to listen.

I heard nothing, except the loud, tumultuous throbbing of my heart, and the steady pouring of the rain outside. Smiling at my momentary terror, I boldly threw the door open and stepped forth.

But my footsteps were again arrested, for a moment; for loud and distinct there came to my ears the strange noises of that winter night: the shuffling of feet, the voices, the thud of a blow, the sound like a dying sob. My breath came quick and fast. I was irresolute for a second. Then I rallied. My spirit was fully roused. I said to myself, that, if I went back, I should despise myself forever. Had I not wished, ever since Georgianna's return, for an opportunity to unravel this mystery, a wish which her presence had prevented? And now that the opportunity had come, should I, coward-like, fear to avail myself of it? No! I would go forward, come what might. I would dare everything. Under the influence of these reflections, the very danger, which, but a little while before, had palsied my limbs, now only stimulated me to proceed.

Fortunately I had list slippers on. For I had worn them, in Georgianna's room, ever since she had been sick, and when I retired, I had put them at my bedside, to be ready in case I should be summoned. They enabled me to glide down stairs noiselessly, and to reach the lower hall undetected. A step or two carried me to the library door. But there a sight presented itself, which arrested my rapid pace and transfixed me, breathless, on the threshold.

CHAPTER XX.

THE library was a spacious apartment, with book-cases ranged along either side, and a stately, old-fashioned fire-place at the extreme end. The cases were built into the wall, and consequently had been left standing, when the room had been dismantled. They had open doors of latticed wire-work, which had originally been lined with green silk, but this was now tarnished by damp and time; and in many places torn and rotten, revealing the empty shelves within. An antique glass chandelier, with crystal drops, depended from the ceiling, in the middle of the room: the centre-piece of this ceiling was a wreath, on a blue ground, on which were gilded stars, after a fashion much in vogue sixty years ago. It was from this chandelier that the brilliant light, which now almost dazzled my eyes, seemed to proceed. Every pendent twinkled and scintillated, throwing out glittering prismatic hues, as the current of wind, that poured in at the open door, stirred them, with a ghostly sound like the rattling of skeleton bones.

Directly under this chandelier, and in the full blaze of its light, was a strange machine, unlike anything I had ever seen before. My first idea, with my heated imagination, was that it was some hideous instrument of torture. But a second look suggested to me that it was a printing press of some description, for on a small table, at its side, was a pile of paper, cut into tiny sheets, and on another table, near by, was a similar pile, only printed upon. As I entered, a man, in his shirt sleeves, whom I recognized for Despencer, was in the act of taking one of these sheets from the press, and transferring it to this second pile; while another man, also without his coat, and whom I saw was Bentley, had hold of the spokes, by which the press was turned, as if he had only that instant taken an impression. As Despencer lifted the paper, and the light fell full upon it, I detected a sheet of bank notes, precisely similar to those I had disbursed for Georgiana, only a few weeks before.

I paused, as I have said, in dismay. For that one, rapid glance had revealed to me, not only the origin of the mysterious noises and lights, but the secret of the connection between Despencer and Bentley. I saw that I had been living, for months, in a den of counterfeiters. I saw why this dreary old mansion, which the country folk believed to be haunted, had been chosen for a residence by Georgiana's husband; for in this room, which no stranger would dare to approach, because of the tragedy which had been enacted there, he was secure from interruption at his felonious work. I thought, too, I comprehended the strange knock I had heard, on that winter night. It must have been Bentley, I said to myself, who, not gaining admittance promptly, had gone around to some other entrance known only to himself; for the strange light and noises, which I had seen and heard afterward, had doubtless been caused by his being at work, and had ceased because he had heard me coming and closed the door. The shuffling of feet moving about, to work the press; the rubbing in of the ink on the steel plate; voices, in conversation, or of one talking to himself; these were precisely such sounds as might be transmuted, by an active fancy, into the spectral ones of old Jane's narrative. I realized it all now. And I further saw that it was chiefly stormy nights that had been chosen for printing the notes, as on such nights the counterfeiters would be less likely to be detected.

I understood also why my presence, in this old mansion, had been courted by Despencer. I had been welcomed because I could be made a dupe, and, in that capacity, employed as a tool to put in circulation the counterfeit notes. Either

Despencer, or Bentley, would have been more liable to suspicion than a woman. Georgiana, though a woman, would not, on more than one account, have been a successful agent. It flashed upon me, as I recalled all this, that I also was criminal in the eyes of the law. Oh! at that moment, how the warning of Mr. Talbot came back to me. It was the bitterest thought of the hour that he would hear of this. But whether he believed me guilty, or not, my fair fame was equally tainted, for in the eyes of the world, from this time out, I would be the confederate of felons.

It is said that, when a person is drowning, a thousand thoughts, ten thousand recollections, rush upon them, and that they live, so to speak, whole years in a moment of time. In that terrible hour, when I saw hope closing over me forever, without a plank to cling to, I also thought and felt this, and other things, with a rapidity I could not have believed possible. I even speculated how far old Jane was a confederate with Despencer and Bentley, and whether the story of the parricide was a pure invention, or otherwise: and I remember that I concluded, from the recollection of her manner, when telling the tale, that the parricide had really happened; but that she had narrated the tragedy to me, doubtless at the instigation of the others, in order to check my curiosity regarding the long-closed room. Some mysterious bond, I supposed, connected her and Bentley, if not Despencer together. What was it?

Then I thought of Georgiana. Instead of being the bride of a nobleman, as, poor fool! she fancied still, she was a felon's wife. More than this, she was the mother of a felon's child. Oh! was it to such degradation, I asked myself, that my thoughtlessness had brought her? I pictured, rapidly, her future. How, sooner or later, the ministers of justice would discover the counterfeits afloat, ferret out the counterfeiter, and consign him to the penitentiary. She would then be alone in the world, unless I stood her friend. That friend I resolved to be, till she died of the shame and horror of the discovery, which I knew would not be long. But her infant? It would survive, it would have no one to take care of it; and I determined to be a mother to it, even though it was the child of a felon. These reflections, in succession, rushed through my mind, and I was only roused, by observing that Bentley had left the press, and was gliding swiftly and noiselessly toward me, with the sinister look of a red Indian stealing through the woods on the war-path.

For the first time, that evening, I lost my presence of mind. My true course was to have

fled, closing the door behind me. But I did not think of this. I was so startled, horrified and bewildered, so doubtful yet that what I saw was not a dream, that I only stepped aside, instinctively, to avoid him. In a moment he had slipped between me and the door, which he closed and locked. The look of savage certainty, the certainty that he had me in his power at last, which supplanted the one of cunning which had been on his face before, gave me the first intimation that a real and tangible peril, a peril even of life, had taken the place of the vague and supernatural one which I had originally dreaded.

He came up to me, with a hideous grin on his features, now looking more satyr-like than ever; and I recoiled, trembling in all my limbs. For what was I in the hands of this brutal, revengeful and desperate man? He followed me up, and I lost all courage. With a shriek, I turned and fled to Despencer.

The latter had stood, hardly less spell-bound than myself, holding the sheet of paper in his hand all this while. As I now threw my arms about him, with a wild look of entreaty for protection, he raised his eyes to his companion, with a sort of puzzled, alarmed expression, which showed me what a craven he was at heart, and how he not only feared his confederate, but depended even on his counsel to extricate themselves from this crisis. No word was spoken, nor did I see Bentley's face, but the eyes of Despencer quailed, and I was not surprised, therefore, when the latter began, nervously, to unloose my arms from about him.

"No, my saucy Miss," said Bentley, following me up, "that won't serve your turn. We meet now where I have the say all to myself."

I knew, from this, how my rejection of him had rankled, in his heart, all the while. I knew also, from the hurried manner in which Despencer disengaged himself from me, that I had no hope except in myself. In a moment all the pride of my character came to my aid. I flung myself loose from Despencer, with a quick, decisive gesture of contempt, and faced Bentley, feeling as I suppose a stag feels, when, after being hunted all day, it turns at bay on its pursuers. His eye quailed before my defiant look.

But it quailed only for a moment. Base as he was, Bentley was brave. He colored, as if with shame, at that momentary hesitation, and said, stopping at a respectful distance, and with an oath,

"You're a trump, and if we can come to an understanding, you need be afraid of nothing. Despencer," and he turned to his comrade, "what do you say? Will this girl keep an oath?"

Despencer seemed to know, as little as I did, what the speaker was aiming at. He looked bewildered from Bentley to me.

A smile of contempt began to wreath the coarse lips of Bentley.

"Will you keep an oath?" he said, turning to me.

I answered promptly and decisively,

"I won't take any oath, here: open the door and let me go."

A derisive laugh was the only reply I received. In spite of my attempts to seem fearless, that laugh smote me with secret terror, for I knew, let what would happen, that I could not depend on Despencer for aid.

"You can and shall swear," said Bentley, fixing his eyes on me, and speaking slowly and between his teeth, as if to convince me how relentless he was. "Look here, Miss; you are no fool. You have caught us at what, if known, would send us to the States Prison; and you can't suppose we're going to let you off, so that we may be blown, to-morrow."

"For God's sake," interposed Despencer, "swear not to tell. You don't know Bentley: I do. Swear."

He caught my arm, as he spoke, and, in his energy, pinched it till it was black and blue. His face was pale as ashes. This terror of his, at what might happen if I persisted in my refusal, revealed to me, far more than words could have done, the peril that surrounded me.

"Swearing, in that way, won't do," interrupted Bentley, coolly folding his arms and leaning against the table. "You don't seem, Despencer, to realize the facts. What guarantee have we that she will keep such an oath? She may do it, at first, and afterward change her mind: and then where are we? No, we must make it her interest to hold her tongue, or rather put her in a position, that, even if she wished to tell, she couldn't. She must swear to marry me: that's the only way; for a wife can't be witness against her husband. You're comparatively safe, for the girl has her own notions of honor, and, unless I'm mistaken in her, won't blab against her cousin's husband. But with me, you see, it's different. She'd as lief hang me, I believe, as look at me."

The cool, logical way, in which he put all this, fairly took my breath away. I realized, at once, that entreaties or supplication would be powerless, addressed to such a man. From his point of view, indeed, there was no other safe course for him to take. The plan he proposed was necessary to self-preservation. But I could detect, also, under this calm show of reason, a

latent exultation lurking in his eye, that seemed to say to me, "You once scorned me, you have been fool enough to come prying into the lion's den, now see what you will make of it." That diabolical look of revenge was for me; the reasoning was for his comrade.

Despencer gazed at Bentley and then at me. Once more I appealed to him by a look. There was still enough of common humanity in him to make him pity me. But he saw the justness of his confederate's reasoning, and evidently knew that there was no possibility of moving that confederate from an opinion so emphatically expressed. "I—I," he stammered, turning finally to me, "can't interfere, you see. Bentley's right. The only safe way is to marry him."

"Never!" I said.

"Never!" asked Bentley, in a mocking tone, moving a step toward me.

"Never!" I retorted, looking him full in the face. Death, I felt, would be preferable to a union with this ruffian, for that would be worse than mere physical death, it would be the death of the soul.

He returned my look, for a full minute, it may have been longer. I had heard that the human eye had a strange power, and the vain hope came across me, that I might awe even this unscrupulous and merciless man. But I felt, as second after second went past, while he continued to gaze at me with that hard, stony, resolute expression, that this hope was slipping by.

The expression of his eye changed, indeed, at last; but what a change! That strange gleam, which I had so often noticed there, that dull and sleepy gleam, which reminded me of a snake, began to blaze, as he advanced on me; till it was transmuted into the glare of an assassin.

CHAPTER XXI.

I RETREATED rapidly to the door. To that movement, perhaps, I owed my life. For, at this very moment, a peal of thunder, more awful even than the one which had awoke me, broke over the house, shaking it as if an earthquake was about to topple it from its foundations. Simultaneously a blinding glare paled the light of the chandelier; the room was filled with a sulphurous smoke; and I was hurled still further from Bentley, by a shock, sharp and quick as that from a vast volcanic battery, and that deprived me, for awhile, of all sensation.

When I began, at last, to recover recollection, I was amazed to behold the door wide open, as if it had been burst violently from its hinges. The

apartment was still dim with smoke, but I could see that there was a great rent, for half the distance down the wall, close by the doorway; and I realized, at once, that the lightning had struck the house, and passed down in this direction, tearing the door off in its course. The next object I saw was Despencer, who stood, as if suddenly transformed to stone, his eyes distended with horror, gazing at some object on the floor between us. My glance following his, rested on the prostrate form of Bentley, that lay directly under the splintered wall, surrounded with bits of broken plaster, and apparently lifeless. My brain was still in a whirl, and, for an instant, I could not realize it all. But a second look at Despencer, and then one at the motionless body, told me that my late enemy had gone to his last account. On his forehead was a small, round hole, as if seared into the brain by a red-hot iron; the side of the face was convulsed; and there was a smell as of burning garments. Despencer stooped over him.

"Good God! he is really dead," he said, in a husky voice, and he started back, his face more livid than ever.

All this had occupied less than a minute, and the echoes of the thunder were still rattling faintly down the heavens, when I heard a shriek, and almost simultaneously a white, sheeted figure, appeared at the entrance, the countenance wild with terror. At sight of it, Despencer, who was just rushing away, recoiled, believing it, I suppose, for the instant, the apparition of the faithless bride. But I knew better. I recognized Georgiana immediately. To explain her appearance, and in this half crazed condition, I must, however, go back for a short interval.

As I had feared, the first of the two thunder-peals had woke my cousin, who, in a state of great alarm, began calling for me. The nurse waited awhile, thinking I would make my appearance, but as I failed to do this, she left the chamber to summon me. While she was absent, Georgiana had risen from bed, and hardly conscious in her terror of what she was doing, had slipped on her dressing-gown. At this juncture the second clap of thunder broke over the house; and this deprived her of what little presence of mind there was left to her. Rushing from her chamber, she darted down the staircase, and turning in the direction where she saw the light, reached the library in the manner, and at the moment, I have described.

For an instant she looked around affrightedly. In her half-insane condition, she was not able to comprehend all she saw; but she understood enough to have some glimpses of the truth. I

shall never forget her horror-struck look, when she beheld the corpse, or the shudder over her whole frame with which she averted her gaze. Her eyes now rested on me for the first time. I was hastening to support her, for I too well foreboded what was to follow. She sprang toward me, as a child, chased by a terrible beast, darts into its mother's arms; broke into a stifled shriek, that was followed by a sob as if her heart had burst; and went off into violent convulsions.

Fortunately the nurse arrived at this crisis. She had found my chamber empty, and was returning to Georgiana's, when she saw a white figure sitting down the staircase. Together we bore the unhappy wife back to her bed. Despencer had partially recovered from his stupor of terror, but was still too unnerved to render us much assistance. The nurse, at first, had given me the candlestick to hold, and motioned for the husband to take Georgiana up in his arms; but seeing his condition, she had snatched the light from me, and handed it to him, with a look almost of contempt, telling him to follow us. In this way, the nurse supporting the head, and I the feet, we bore my cousin to her chamber, Despencer creeping after us, speechless, and shivering as if in an ague-fit, hardly able to hold the candle in his nerveless hand.

I have but a vague recollection of some of the events of that terrible night and the two succeeding days. But others are burned into my memory indelibly. My office was at the side of my cousin, whom I did not leave, except for a few minutes, for eight-and-forty hours. During part of that time she lay in violent convulsions, so that the nurse and I expected every hour to be her last. Toward morning the strength of the attacks abated, and the physician, who arrived soon after, gave us faint hopes of her recovery. But though she had relief, from that period out, she never looked up again; and we could see that her days were numbered.

For it was impossible to conceal from her entirely the true state of affairs, and this knowledge broke her heart. If nothing else would have betrayed to her the real character of her husband, the passionate grief of old Jane would have done it; for the mystery that connected the ancient servant with Bentley was solved, now that he had met so fearful a death. Bentley, it came out, was old Jane's son. He had never, indeed, borne her name; and had been educated away from her. But her heart clung to him, in secret, as the only thing which was left to her to love. When he grew up, his handsome person, his talents, and the fashionable company he kept, made her dote on him, if pos-

sible, more than ever. In her lonely life, at the deserted old mansion, he was continually in her thoughts. When his evil habits began to tell on his fortunes, and he not only slipped out of reputable society, but got into pecuniary difficulties, she opened her store of hoardings and supplied him from her own purse. At last, even this resource was exhausted, and then Bentley became a sharper, a gambler, even worse. But still she loved him, as only a lonely, desolate woman can. Years passed. Her son grew toward middle-age; she was becoming decrepit herself; he associated now only with felons; when he was with her he often struck her; and yet she loved him still. Finally, he came to her and demanded the use of the long-closed library to establish a press for counterfeiting; and though it seemed to her almost sacrilege, for she was thoroughly superstitious, she consented. Hence it was that Despencer, with whom Bentley had now become associated, had rented the old mansion. But a terror of some great calamity, which seemed to haunt her like a Fate in a Greek tragedy, kept her in continual apprehension. Often she implored her son to forego his practices, or, at least, to carry them on somewhere else. But he answered only with a scornful laugh. All this we learned from her frantic ravings.

The clap of thunder had awoke her in common with the rest of the household, and the shrieks of my cousin had brought her down stairs. When she saw the corpse of her son, she broke into the most piteous lamentations, mixed with insane reproaches of all in the dwelling. The dangerous condition of Georgiana did not restrain her. She burst into the chamber, and assaulted Despencer to his face, declaring that if he had not misled her son, she would not be childless. My flesh crept at the frightful manner in which she cursed the cowering survivor, invoking on him and his family every evil which her imagination could suggest. We could not, for some time, leave Georgiana long enough to force the half-maniacal mother from the room. But when our patient had partially recovered, the nurse and I, with some help from Despencer, removed her, and double-locked the door. I believe, after this, her passion took a new turn and subsided into grief, and that she threw herself on the dead body of Bentley, and wept frantically there till almost morning.

It was daybreak before we could rally Despencer sufficiently to induce him to go for a physician. I have always thought that he was afraid to go before. Even while he remained in his wife's chamber, he would start and look fur-

tively around, at the slightest noise, as if he expected another thunderbolt to fall, and that he was to be its victim.

He never returned from that errand. I had already determined, in my own mind, that he would not. For it was impossible to prevent a coroner's jury on the body of Bentley, when the fact of the felonious occupation in which the dead man had been engaged would be discovered: and in such an event, the arrest and trial of his confederate would inevitably follow.

I thought over all this, as soon as the condition of Georgiana gave me leisure to think of anything but her peril. I had many doubts also as to my own immunity from the law. I knew I was innocent in intention; but I knew likewise that this would avail me but little. However, it was impossible for me to leave Georgiana. My post of duty was at her side, and there I would stay, I said to myself, even if it led me to the Penitentiary.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE OLD STONE MANSION.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON, AUTHOR OF "THE VALLEY FARM," "MABEL," "KATE AYLESFORD," &c.

[Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1859, by Charles J. Peterson, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, in and for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.]

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CHAPTER XXII.

NEARLY a month had passed since the events narrated in the last chapter. The coroner's jury had met, as I had expected, the morning after the death of Bentley, and I had been summoned to give my testimony. I had kept back nothing. I had admitted my unconscious share in putting the counterfeit notes in circulation. "I will tell the truth, the whole truth," I had said to myself, as I descended the stairs, "and trust to God's mercy to rescue me from this great strait." Nor had I trusted in vain. It is true, that, at first, I had cause to fear for the consequences of my sincerity. More than one of the jurymen looked ominously at me. Several of the spectators whispered aloud their belief in my guilt. But the coroner himself was a humane man, and what was equally fortunate for me, an influential one. He interposed promptly in my behalf. "I see no reason," he said, "why we should detain this young lady. She has been unfortunate in her associations, perhaps a little imprudent; but that is all. Truth is stamped on every word she has said. Had she been a confederate of these felons, she would have suppressed much that she has told. I think we may let her go." He looked around on the jury, and seeing no dissent, bowed me out, having first thanked me for my attendance. I am told, that, in these later days, official personages are less courteous. I hear it with regret, especially when I think of the innocent, who may occasionally be brought before them, as I was brought, and to whom the shame of being baited on a witness-stand, in public, is enough, without the aggravation of brutality on the part of their questioners.

Old Jane, however, was less fortunate. As there was no doubt that she had been cognizant of the purpose for which the library had been used, she was committed to prison, nominally as an accessory before the fact, but really, I understood, in order to secure her evidence against Despencer, in case the latter should be arrested.

I have said that the events of that awful night broke Georgianna's heart. She knew that she was dying, and one of her first requests, after the

inquest adjourned, was that I should acquaint her father with the fact.

Accordingly I started, the next day, for the city, on a double errand. The first was to call at Mr. Elliott's. I found the house, as I had feared, shut up, and in answer to my inquiries, was told that the family had gone to Newport for the summer. To provide for this contingency, I had written a letter, which I now directed, at the grocery store at the corner, and then carried to the post-office myself. My other errand was to dispose of a few trinkets belonging to Georgianna. For neither she, nor I, now that we knew how her husband's money had been acquired, could use a penny even of what had been received in change for the notes. There were fewer trinkets than I had supposed, and those of less value; and I now learned that the others, many of them quite costly ones, had been taken by Despencer, from time to time.

For two or three days Georgianna was comparatively calm. But when the time came for a letter, in answer to the one I had written, she grew restless and excited. Daily, at her request, I walked into the city, in order to inquire for a reply, personally, at the post-office. I returned from these long and exhausted journeys, so tired that sometimes I almost fainted; for it was in the worst days of summer, and my physical system was worn down by late events; but I forgot it all in witnessing the disappointment of my cousin. I had made up my mind, from the first, that no notice would be taken of her appeal. Nor, though I wrote, at her solicitation, two other letters, was any answer ever returned.

The anxiety of the mother soon began to affect the health of the child. But why should I linger on the sad story? Together they wilted away; together they sleep in one coffin.

It was nearly a month, as I have said, since the awful retribution of which the old mansion had been a witness. Night was falling fast. The windows were up to admit the air, for the day had been unusually sultry. Georgianna had failed so fast, during the preceding twenty-four hours, that the nurse and I foresaw she could scarcely

survive till morning. "About twelve o'clock, Miss, she'll go," whispered this attendant, "they 'most always do: it's queer, but I've seen a great many die, and they drop off, either then, or just before morning; leastways in the night sometime; two die in the night, where one dies in the day."

I rose, to escape this garrulous talk, and went to the window. The cool air refreshed my heated brow indescribably. The moon was at the full. Under the soft light the landscape wore a calm as of heaven. The little brook, hidden in the hollow, sung half murmuringly, as if chanting a low, sweet hymn to the quiet trees. The great pines, in front of the house, stood dark and shrouded, like mighty mourners hushed in solemn awe. "Oh! this great mystery of life and death," I said to myself. "What is Eternity? How can we live forever and forever; we who can conceive nothing, which has not beginning and end? Yet how can man perish, while stars and space survive: the spiritual die, while the material endures?" I looked up at the moon. A small, fleecy cloud was near it. How placidly the great orb moved along, returning my look with something of almost intelligence, but still inscrutable! The cloud, for a moment, obscured the face of the orb. A temporary darkness fell on the landscape. The pines seemed to sob, the brook to chant a requiem. A cold shiver ran through all my veins, as if the King of Death, in that instant, had cast its shadow over the scene. Then the great moon emerged, bright and calm, from its passing obscuration, and as it moved majestically along, all Nature seemed to rejoice silently. "It is the life after death," I said, involuntarily. "Thank God for immortality."

A whispered summons from the nurse recalled me to the bed-side. Georgianna had awoke, had asked for her child, and had then wished me to be summoned. She smiled faintly, as I drew near.

"You will be a mother to it, if it lives," she said, feebly, looking from the babe to me. "I almost wish it was going home too." She contemplated it for awhile, as only a mother can regard her infant, and added, "poor little dear! it does not know what it will have to suffer."

I knew, from the look of the wan, little face, that the daughter would not long survive the mother; but I promised, with tears and a choking voice, all that Georgianna wished. She faintly gathered the babe to her side, crooning over it for awhile. Then she looked up, saying,

"I once feared death: I don't fear it now. There is nothing left to live for, but baby; and

God, in His wisdom, sees others are fitter to bring it up than I am. Oh! what a wasted life mine has been. How many opportunities thrown away. I thought only of my own pleasure; and how God has requited me." She paused for breath. "But He has made me to see the error of my ways. His mercy has brought me here. The idols I have worshiped have fallen at my feet and been shivered into the clay they were. I am not fit, like you, Maggy, to fight the battle of adverse life. His loving kindness calls me home. Oh! God is good, is good——"

She spoke these words with almost rapture. Then, for a time, she was silent, and lay with closed eyes, but seemed to be praying. I fancied, perhaps it was not all fancy, that a celestial glow gradually irradiated her countenance. After awhile she looked up, smiling with ineffable sweetness.

"Read to me, Maggy," she said, speaking slowly and with difficulty, "that part—of the chapter—in Revelations."

I knew now of what she had been thinking as she prayed. The chapter was one, part of which I had read to her, daily, for more than two weeks; for above all other portions of the sacred volume, it seemed to give her the most comfort. I took the Bible and began to read with a composed voice, though the tears fell fast; for I felt that it was the last time I should ever read to her.

"And I beheld, and lo! a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.'"

There was an audible response from the bed. I read on to the end of the twelfth verse. As I paused then, for an instant, the jubilant voice of the brook seemed to echo, through the heavenly night, the concluding words, "forever and forever."

I resumed,

"And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, 'What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence come they?' And I said unto him, 'Sir, thou knowest.' And he said unto me, 'These are they which come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple; and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more,

neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

"Shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," was echoed softly from the bed; and then all was quiet.

I waited five minutes, ten, half an hour, watching while my cousin seemed to sleep. At last I heard a deep sigh. I looked quickly at the nurse; then at Georgiana. Her hands were folded on her breast, her head lay back on the pillow; she was dead. But in the rapt expression of the face, I was reminded of a picture I had once seen of St. Catharine translated to heaven by supporting angels; and as the trees rustled without in a sudden breeze, I started, half expecting to see the hushed figure float away, upborne by similar celestial messengers.

She was happy at last! She had gone from much tribulation. While I looked down, reverently, on what had been so lately the home of an immortal soul, and which was still radiant with its departing sunset, other texts rose up to my memory, as if some unseen spirit audibly repeated them.

"And I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps; and they sung, as it were, a new song before the throne.

"These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

"And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign forever and ever."

CHAPTER XXIII.

In the same coffin, we laid mother and babe, for the latter did not survive quite twenty-four hours. There was no mourner but myself.

We had been warned to quit the old mansion long before, for the proprietor was scandalized by the purposes to which it had been put. But I had begged his forbearance on Georgiana's account, and had, with difficulty, obtained it. On returning from the funeral, I locked the door, leaving the furniture as payment for the rent, and taking my slender wardrobe and still slenderer purse, set forth to begin life anew.

I found lodgings, in a humble boarding-house, in an obscure part of the city. That night, I lay long awake, revolving plans for the future, the best of which were hopeless enough. At last I fell asleep. But I soon woke with a chill, though it was the heated term in August. Before

morning I was in a violent fever. A serious fit of illness, I foresaw, impended. My nervous and physical systems had both been over-taxed, and I had now to pay the penalty. Alone, amid strangers, my heart shrank within me. For awhile, as I lay tossing on my bed, my temples throbbing to bursting, I was on the point of repining at my fortune; for I knew not but that my landlady, on discovering my condition, might take advantage of a period of delirium to rob me of my purse and turn me into the street. But I remembered, in that hour, the blessed words I had read to my dying cousin. "Through much tribulation," I said. "Through much tribulation," I kept saying, till I lost consciousness, sinking into the stupor of disease.

For weeks, as I was told afterward, I lay unconscious. Of all that dreary time I have only a confused recollection. Wild visions of happiness, snatched from me at the very moment of fruition, tormented me day and night. Now I stood waiting, a bride at the altar, and already heard a well known footstep approaching, when the earth opened and fiends rising up snatched me away. Now, famished and athirst, I was drifting about on a desolate sea, when an angel appeared above extending a hand to rescue me. But just as the fingers touched mine, a thunder-bolt separated us, thick darkness enveloped me, the wild waves rose, spectres gibbered past. Now I was falling, falling through illimitable space. Then the character of the illusions changed. I was dying in the public streets. Thousands passed by, yet nobody took pity on me, till one familiar form approached and stopped with instinctive humanity. But when he saw who it was, his lips curled with scorn and he turned away. Again: I lay, bound to a hungry lioness, in an African desert, momentarily expecting to be devoured. The savage beast would look at me, licking her mouth, and then roar across the vast waste of sand, where her famished whelps were hastening toward us. A hunter approached. Amid all his disguise I knew him. He did not, however, see me. I tried to call him, but I could not, for a spell chained my tongue. Oh! the horror of those moments while he went slowly by, almost touching me. Then I was a homeless wanderer, on a mighty plain. A whirling snow storm almost blinded me, yet I struggled on, for far ahead, dimly seen through the tempest, shone a feeble light. At last I reached the doorway, and had just strength to knock, when I sank exhausted on the threshold. The portal opened, and joy of joys! he it was that stooped to lift me. But before he could touch my person, a fair-haired lady, whom I recognized

only too well, rushed between, and bade him stand aside, in God's name, for that the marriage vow separated him from me forever. The door shut with a clang and I was alone and perishing.

When I began to recover, I was feebler than a child. Weeks went by, even after this, before I could leave my room. At last, about the middle of autumn, I found myself comparatively restored to health.

But what a prospect there was in the future! I knew not, in all the world, a friend to whom I could apply. My funds were exhausted. The winter would soon be at hand, and it was a winter of which the most terrible forebodings were everywhere entertained; for commercial and manufacturing distress were universal. Since I had been struck down, by illness, one of those financial crises which occasionally devastate the nation had occurred: thousands of the rich had become poor; starvation stared the multitude in the face.

By chance, one day, when reduced to nearly the last extremity of despair, I saw an advertisement, in a daily paper, which I had borrowed to read. It ran as follows:

WANTED.—A governess to take charge of two small children. Apply at Hemlock Farm, near the Poplar Station, on the Ridge railroad.

A sudden hope filled me. I would expend what little money I had, in going to this place; for I reasoned that its distance would preclude many applications; and so my chance of success would be increased. It was the first time, too, the advertisement had been inserted; and if I set out, at once, I might anticipate all others. In five minutes I was on my way to the railroad office, where I learned that Poplar Station was about fifty miles distant, and that the afternoon train would start in an hour. I determined to go that day.

Before long, therefore, I was rushing along the side of a beautiful river, the western sun gilding its wooded heights and shimmering on its placid waters. The towns and factories, scattered at intervals on either shore, shot past like white wreaths of smoke. Now we dashed through a dark tunnel, now crossed the stream in a twinkling on a bridge. The rapid motion was in unison with the stir and excitement of my mind. I looked through the barred windows of the car and blessed the mile-posts as they flew by. I was impatient to be at my journey's end.

For I now began to fear that some one had anticipated me. There was a morning train, so

that any one who had seen the advertisement soon enough, might have had the start of me by several hours. I knew there must be hundreds out of employment, who were quite as competent for the situation. Then I tortured myself with the idea that there might be many in the train on the same errand. I saw more than one whose air and dress gave color to this notion. How I watched, at each station, to see if they got out! When, at last, all had left but one, leaving no other passengers of my sex, except ladies whose dress showed them above the necessity of seeking such a situation, and coarse featured women evidently belonging to the agricultural population of the German county we were traversing, I sighed with inexpressible relief: a relief only to be understood by those, who have been in fear for their daily bread, and have had those fears quieted temporarily.

I now began to speculate, for the first time, as to the character of the place I was visiting; for, up to this point, such had been my eagerness to get the start of other applicants, I had not thought of this. Its homely title showed that it was an ordinary farm-house; and from its location, in the heart of a region wholly rural, I concluded the culture of its family was of the rudest. But why need a governess at all? Why not be content with the road-side school? I puzzled myself, for a long while, endeavoring to solve this problem, but to no purpose. I could conjecture nothing, except that one of the children, if not both of them, were half idiotic; that this rendered their attendance at the district school impossible; and hence the necessity of a governess. I knew enough of that section of the state to know that no other circumstance could induce a farmer to resort to so comparatively expensive a method of education. I settled, therefore, that this was the state of the case. I was aware there were plenty of farmers, in that vicinity, rich enough to employ a governess, if compelled to; so there was no difficulty on this account.

I now began to picture to myself the life I should lead. In imagination, I drew a picture of the house and its surroundings. It was an old stone dwelling, probably with a roof green with moss, standing in some low bit of ground, near the river, where the early German settlers always located their habitations, partly to secure a more abundant supply of water, partly because of the richer soil in the bottoms. It had, near it, a stone barn, a huge edifice, more than four times as large as itself, bursting with abundant crops. Close by was a little, low, white-washed spring-house, with a solitary willow drooping

over it. There might be a small garden in front of the house, with a few common flowers; but this was all; and even this was doubtful. About the whole place there was an air of thrift; but nothing picturesque or refined. Everything was reduced to the level of the tamest common-place. I felt, that, in such a household, my soul would starve. Yet what else could I do? I must feed my immortal part on these dry husks as well as I could, or perish literally, and for want of mere physical food.

Then I began to think of the mother. Perhaps here there would be some alleviation. Perhaps God, in afflicting her children, had done it to soften and refine her. Sorrow, with natures that have any latent good in them, does this. I was willing to believe it of her. I imagined her a little, thin, worn, patient woman, grey before her time, knitting all day long, when not otherwise occupied, her eyes filling with quiet tears as she looked at her helpless innocents. I saw her start, with nervous terror, at the rude voice and loud step of her husband. In such a family, I said to myself, I will die by inches. For the very tax on my sympathies, created by the poor children and their mother, will wear me out all the faster. There will be no relief from any quarter. No book will ever reach me in this out of the way abode. The very name of the place, Hemlock Farm, so full of sombre and funereal associations, seemed to be a presentiment of my fate. I should live in an atmosphere of slow poison, where every intellectual faculty, every fine perception, would wither and perish. Surrounded by coarse associations, cut off from all revivifying sympathy, I would grow coarse myself in time. Perhaps, too, there might be other things, rude sons, vulgar farm hands, with whom I would be compelled to associate, and whose brutalities or insolence I would be forced to endure; for in such households all alike ate, at the same table, as I well knew, and lived in the common sitting-room, so that companionship was inevitable. As this picture rose before me, I half resolved to abandon my expedition. But a thought of my empty purse, and of the terrible winter approaching, silenced my repugnance.

"It will not be for long," I said. "I am no more the gay, admired *fiancee* of a man of talent and wealth; no more flushed with health, or intoxicated with spirits. This shortness of breath; this little hacking cough; these pains in the chest, are not merely the remnants of the fever. Do I not know their meaning? And it is well."

We were, at that moment, passing one of those antique church edifices, standing in the midst of a neglected grave-yard, which tell of the vicinity

of a village. I thought, that, in less than a year, I should be lying, in just such a place, alone and forgotten, without a head-stone to mark the spot, with no one even to come and lay a flower on the sod. My words, "it is well," were the response to this thought.

Suddenly the train stopped, and the conductor threw open the door, crying,

"Poplar Station."

I rose mechanically. Faint and weak, I staggered along, catching by the seats as I went. The conductor politely assisted me to descend. As soon as I touched the ground, he waived his hand to the engineer, caught at the rail as the train began to move; and I was left alone.

CHAPTER XXIV.

I was left alone. There was a deep cutting just before me, and not a house in sight. A path led up the bank; and this I took. It conducted me to a traveled highway, from which I could see, at a little distance, a road-side tavern. It was one of those so common in Pennsylvania; a low, rambling stone inn, with a huge horse-trough in front, where a team of Conestoga horses was, at this instant, leisurely drinking.

As no other house was in sight, and it was necessary to get some directions, I put on a bold front and walked forward. The teamster stared rudely as I came up, and the ostler winked to a half drunken vagabond in rags, who stood, with his hands in his pocket, idly watching my approach.

I faltered out, as composedly as I could, my request, addressing myself to the teamster as the least repulsive of the three.

"Nein," he said, shaking his head.

I repeated the question. "Pray, sir, can you direct me to Hemlock Farm?" For I did not understand him.

"Nein!" he answered again, staring at me vacantly, but with a good-humored look.

I now turned to the ostler.

"Is it Hemlock farrum yer asking after?" he said, scratching his head of shock hair; and swearing a favorite Celtic oath, he told me "he'd niver heard of such a place."

The half drunken vagabond now approached. As I saw him come up, I looked imploringly toward the inn door, in hopes some female, or at least the landlord, would make his appearance. But not a soul was in sight. The whole place, with the exception of these three and the horses drinking at the trough, seemed to have been asleep for ages. It was one of those warm, October days, which temporarily recall the summer,

when a drowsy haze veils the distant landscape, and when, in silent afternoons in the country, the voice may be heard for a mile. A hound lay asleep, in the sunshine, at the end of the porch, his nose buried between his paws. The pigeons were ranged, like statues, along the eaves of the barn. There was not a sound, except that of the water running from the trough and the noise of the horses as they drank.

"P'raps I can direct the young lady," said the inebriate, speaking with a hiccup, but making a not ungraceful bow; and I saw, at once, that he was that most pitiable of all objects, an educated man who had become a common sot. "Hemlock Farm, did you say? Why, that's it, yonder."

He pointed, as he spoke, to a peculiarly shaped hill, at the distance of two miles or more, a long, ridgy, precipitous hill, clothed with dark green hemlocks, and washed, at its base, by the river. The mellow afternoon sun glittering on the water at its foot, and reflected from a white bridge that crossed at the hither end of the hill, brought the sombre evergreens out into bold relief, and transfigured the whole scene. No house, however, was visible. Perhaps it was concealed, I thought, by the shoulder of a mountain, in shape like a crouching lion, which, soaring to the height of a thousand feet or more, intruded its rugged outline between me and the approach to the hill.

"Do you see that hill?" said my guide, stammeringly, steadying himself by the pump. "The one just past the South Mountain—it's the only one of that shape in the county, and you can't miss it—well," drawing out the words slowly, "that's Hemlock Farm."

"Thank you, sir," said I, hurriedly, glad to escape, and I moved on. But I was stopped, immediately, by the speaker, who laid his hand, familiarly, on my shoulder.

"You needn't be so scared, Miss," he said, surlily, as I shrank away, while the ostler laughed outright, and the teamster stood with a grin on his face. "I'm a gentleman, I am, though you may see my coat's the worse for wear. I've studied at the University—sity—I have. You were going without knowing how to get to Hemlock Farm. You must take the left hand road, at the red barn, a quarter of a mile further on, and so go down to the river: then keep up stream, till you come to the bridge; cross that and you're at Hemlock Farm."

I hardly waited for him to finish. I had taken good care to keep out of the reach of his arm, this time, and now walked away as fast as I could. But I had not gone far, before I heard the speaker muttering, with many oaths, some-

thing about my not being a lady after all, or I would have given him something to drink: and at this I hurried on the faster.

The way proved longer than I had supposed. Between my fatigue, my weakness, and my anxiety, the miles lengthened out interminably. The sun was low in the western heavens, when I reached the bridge. Now, for the first time, I began to think what I should do, if my application failed. Where would I spend the night? The nearest town was several miles distant, so that, in my present exhausted condition, it would be impossible for me to walk there, before dark. But I shuddered when I thought of being out, after nightfall, on these lonely mountain roads.

Before crossing the bridge, I sat down, for a moment, on a boulder, partly to rest, partly to reflect on this new emergency. Just above, the river made a bold sweep, enclosing a wooded island, the trees of which, large and shapely, and without undergrowth, threw their long, black shadows over the greensward, as the setting sun struck slantwise between them. A boatman's horn filled the air with softened music. On the opposite side, Hemlock Hill, rising precipitous and picturesque, glowed in the golden radiance. The whole scene was typical of an indescribable peace. Oh! how I longed, at that moment, to lie down, where I sat, amid these calm surroundings, and sink to rest forever.

I rose, at last, wearily. I began to feel a presentiment that I should not succeed. Yet I tried, in defiance of this, to buoy myself up with hope. I said, again and again, they will at least ask me to stay all night. Then I remembered, that, if they should not, I was wasting precious moments. I dragged myself down the descent. My fears increased, as I went, so that I almost ran at last.

I arrived so exhausted and breathless at the toll-gate, that the keeper looked at me with surprise, a surprise which was not diminished when I asked him if this was Hemlock Farm before me. Observing he stared at me, dubiously, I told him my errand.

"You are the school marm then," he said, regarding me with uplifted eyebrows. "Humph! Well, that's the place."

I had no doubt that my wearied look and travel-soiled dress somewhat detracted from my character, and I explained, in this way, the questionable air with which he kept staring at me, while he pointed across the river. I colored with embarrassment, not unmixed with anger, as I said, drawing down my veil again, which I had thrown up for air as I walked,

"What? That house ahead? Do you know if anybody is at home?"

It was a small farm-house, with more pretensions to elegance than I had seen in this region; and my heart bounded with delight; for the household, which could surround itself with such a pretty flower-garden, must, I thought, have some refinement.

"No," he said, gruffly, and coolly turning on his heel to go in, offended, I suppose, by my putting down my veil, "that isn't the place at all. You must pass that house, and taking the road up the river, go in at a gate, you'll find there, about a hundred and fifty yards farther on. The place you're after is up the hill."

My heart fell. With a sigh I turned away. As I passed the gate of the pretty farm-house, a sweet voice was heard singing, within. It was a mother warbling a lullaby over her child. The memory of my own happy infancy rushed back to me. I recollected, as vividly as if it had happened but yesterday, my mother leaning over my cradle, while she rocked it and sang that very lullaby. It seemed to me a dream of heaven, in some former state of existence, from which endless ages now separated me: a Paradise of peace and love gone forever. And the tears gushed to my eyes as I thought this.

I staggered on. The road began to ascend slowly, terraced along the river-side. At the end of what seemed the little farm, I came to a dense wood of evergreens, the beginning of those which covered the sides and top of the hill. Suddenly, when I had almost passed it, I saw a plain, unpretending gate. This, I know, must be the one to which I had been directed; and I turned in.

It was like passing into a cool cave out of a hot noonday. The trees met overhead, so that not a ray of sunshine penetrated to the avenue, which was filled with a subdued light. Underneath, the ground was carpeted with the brown tassels of the pines, that crackled under the foot. An aromatic fragrance filled the air. The road began immediately to wind up the hill, disclosing dim woodland vistas at every turn.

After I had walked, perhaps, the eighth of a mile, I suddenly emerged from the wood; and lo! what a prospect. Before me, and separated from me only by an intervening valley, was the mountain, whose side profile had concealed Hemlock Farm from me, when I had stopped at the tavern; but now the front of the mountain rose rounded and wooded, a perfect cone. This formed the right hand setting of the picture. To the left, on the other side of the river, was another mountain, a long, bleak, bare stretch of

rock, framing in the landscape on that side. Between these, stretching far away to the horizon, and widening as it went, the river meandering in the middle ground, was an undulating country, covered with alternate farms and woodlands, and diversified with villages. Away and away, following the glittering water, my eye traversed, as if fascinated, over the vast landscape, till it lost itself in the purple haze, that hung around a ridge of hills, miles and miles distant. The prospect burst on me so unexpectedly, everything was so different from what I had looked for, that I stopped, for some time, breathless with surprise.

Then I turned to look for the house, which, up to this time, I had not seen. It stood almost directly in front, a little to the right, about five hundred feet off, on a grassy terrace, below which swept the road. The dwelling itself was comparatively small; but in no sense could it be called a farm-house. It was a quaint, picturesque mansion, with a deep bay window looking down into the valley, and numerous high-pointed gables. Vines gamboled over the balustrades, ran up the grey walls, twined lovingly about the diamond-paned casements, and nestled under the eaves. The principal front seemed to look my way, for there was a balcony before it, extending its whole length; and this balcony led into a spacious garden, not a stiff, formal one, such as city horticulturalists are so fond of, but with evergreens scattered about, and grassy slopes, and rose bushes here and there, giving it a wild, half-forest grace, like a garden in the Arabian Nights. The side of the house, which looked down toward the valley, commanded a gently sloping lawn, many acres in extent, which swept almost to the foot of the hill.

The whole place had a look of peace indescribable. Its quiet and repose stole over my senses like a subtle perfume. "Ah!" I said to myself, "if I can only find a refuge here, during the few months I have to live."

But my emotions of hope and delight were soon succeeded by others. What chance had I, without a solitary recommendation, coming a-foot, my travel-soiled appearance alone sufficient to create prejudices against me, to obtain employment here? For everything about the spot betokened the most fastidious taste. The mistress of such a Paradise, I said to myself, will have nothing about her which is not in unison with the spot. She will not tolerate this haggard face for a minute. One look at me will be enough to fill her with disgust.

It was with a faint heart, therefore, that I resumed my way. For I determined to proceed

in spite of all. Having come so far, I would go through with it, even to enduring the startled glance and supercilious dismissal of the fine lady, who had never, perhaps, been so near a starving fellow-woman, nor ever would be again. But my hand trembled, nevertheless, as I lifted the knocker.

A man servant, neatly dressed in black, opened the door immediately. He had a pleasant, ruddy face, whose good humor reassured me a little, and a quiet and deferential manner, whose magnetism influenced me unaccountably.

"Will you say that a young woman has called to see about the governess' place?" I said.

"Yes! ma'am, walk in!" was the answer, and, with a reassuring smile, he ushered me into the parlor.

The parlor was a large and elegant apartment, hung round with copies, in water-colors, of some of Turner's best pictures; with choice engravings after Landseer; and with other specimens of first-class modern art. A statuette, here and there, on a bracket; a rich silver salver, with pitcher and flagons, on a console; luxurious chairs scattered about; a table covered with new books and pamphlets; these were the other most salient objects in the room. At one end was a deep bay window. As I crossed the floor, I saw there was a mirror, over the mantle-piece, reaching to the ceiling; and before this I paused a moment.

Idid it unconsciously. I suppose no woman, at any time, much less when she is about to receive a stranger, ever passes a mirror without glancing at her face. It is a habit we acquire early, and of which we never entirely get rid. On that day, certainly, not a particle of personal vanity entered into the feeling, which caused me to stop before that mirror. I had but one thought, which was to provide for myself, if possible, a respectable home, where, for the little time which remained to me, I might earn my livelihood in the humblest way. I had, consciously, but a single emotion, which was an utter, utter despair, with not a ray of hope to light it up. Once, and once only, as I crossed the room, and its elegance and luxury affected me like a subtle perfume, I said to myself again, "Oh! if I could only find a haven here for the few short months I shall live." But I laughed immediately, to myself, at the idea; it was too wild to entertain.

I started back at sight of myself. Haggard and wan, I had felt that I was; but the reality far exceeded my expectations. If I had ever had any beauty, as I had once been told, it was gone now. I recalled, by some strange association, the fact that the night of Georgiana's birth-

day ball, I had paused an instant in front of the mirror, before I descended, and, intoxicated by the atmosphere of love and flattery in which I had been living, had said to myself that I really believed I was beautiful. The contrast between my face then as I remembered it, and now, was that of two lives, as wide asunder as eternity, and which never, never could be reunited. I was no more the same being than if I had been born in a different century. Vast gulfs, fathomless abysses, lay between what I was now and had been then.

My lip began to tremble. The thought of the past was too much for me. I turned from the mirror, and stepped hastily to the bay window, to shake off these emotions by looking at the unrivaled landscape, for Nature always soothed me like a friend or a mother.

It had its effect. I grew composed again. And now I bethought me how I should get over the awkwardness of an introduction. The strange manner in which I had come, my total want of recommendations, struck me now more than they had even at the entrance. I half repented that I had entered. Instinctively I looked about to see if I could escape. But the opening and shutting of a distant door, as if some one was approaching, told me I would be too late; and nervous and excited, my heart beating fast, I awaited this interview.

At that moment, it occurred to me that the best way to open the conversation, would be to present the paper, containing the advertisement, as a sort of letter of introduction. Fortunately, I had marked the advertisement around with ink, and hastily fumbling for the journal in my pocket, I folded it, with trembling hands, so as to bring the advertisement outward, and holding it ready, awaited the coming footsteps.

Awaited them, did I say? They were now near enough to be distinctly audible. Instead of being those of a woman, they were the footsteps of a man, and something in them struck a cold chill to my heart and made my knees sink under me. I clutched, for support, at the top of a chair, by which I had been standing, or I should have fallen. For one breathless, agonizing second of time, I doubted; but at the next footfall I prayed that the floor might open beneath me, and I sink forever from sight. In another moment, the door opened, and, as I feared, Mr. Talbot stood before me.

Yes, Mr. Talbot stood before me. There was the same commanding form, the same majestic brow, the same eagle eye. Time had passed differently with him from what it had with me. That proud, high air of manhood, defiant of all

obstacle, as if the possessor exulted in having difficulties to overcome, that union of physical, intellectual and moral power, which had always been so pre-eminently his, was still there, only more developed, more self-centred than ever.

For an instant, he did not see, in the twilight of the room, where his visitor was. But at last his eye, that lightning eye, fell upon me.

I withered beneath it. I recalled how we had last parted; how that he was now married; how that he would despise me, more than ever, for what would seem to him an unmaidenly visit. It appeared to me, that, as he recognized his visitor, scorn, anger and loathing succeeded each other in his face. The room swam around me. I reeled, clutched at the air, and fell headlong to the floor.

CHAPTER XXV.

I do not know how long I was insensible. When, at last, I faintly opened my eyes, I was still comparatively unconscious, and neither realized immediately where I was, nor the indelicacy of my situation. For I was dizzy with long-forgotten bliss, as, looking up, I saw Mr. Talbot's face bending anxiously over me, felt his arms around me, and heard him whisper, "darling, have I found you?" I had a dim recollection, also, that it was his eager kisses, which had woken me to life again.

Do not censure me, that, for an instant, I gave myself up to this delicious dream. That, as memory returned, I almost wished it had never come back, for then, in happy ignorance, I might still have lain in those arms and forget the solemn vows that separated us forever. But I cast away the temptation the moment I fully realized where I was. With burning blushes, I struggled away from his embrace, and attempted to rise feebly to my feet; for I had been lying on the floor, with my head pillowed against his breast, while he knelt above me.

"Oh! do not leave me," he said, pleadingly, holding me fast. "Surely you are not angry with me still. Margaret, dear Margaret, we can yet be happy."

Was he mad? Or did he meditate toward me the deepest insult which a man can inflict on a helpless woman?

I made a new effort to extricate myself, but he held me the tighter, the more I struggled.

"You do not mean it," he said. "Heaven has not sent you here, that we should be parted again."

There was now no mistaking his words. Was this the man of whom I had made a hero to myself? Whom I had secretly worshiped as the

best and noblest of his sex? Indignation gave me strength.

"Sir," I said, "unhand me. I will call Mrs. Talbot." I rose, as I spoke, and stood before him, my eyes flashing, my bosom heaving with anger.

"Mrs. Talbot!" he answered, in surprise. "What do you mean?" Then a sudden light broke over his countenance, and he cried, joyfully, "You don't think me married, do you?"

The tone in which he said this, as well as the look, convinced me that I had been deceived for months. How my heart leaped at the conviction! Then the blood rushed to my very brow. I covered my face in confusion.

His arm was around me again in an instant. "Darling," he whispered, "what a villain you must have thought me!" And he went on rapidly, "I am not married. I never could have married any one but my own Margaret. This is my sister's present residence, and as she is out dining, I came to apologize for her temporary absence, little thinking that in the supposed governess I should find one I was going to seek to-morrow. It is only three days since I returned from Europe, where I have been since early in the spring. But tell me, how came you to suppose me married? What enemy has been at work defaming me?"

I was now weeping silently on his shoulder, but the tears were those of joy and thanksgiving. "God had been good to me," I said to myself, "more so, a thousand times, than I deserved."

I would only tire the reader if I was to linger on this scene. The next half hour was spent in mutual explanations. He listened to my story often with a kindling eye. When I had finished, he said,

"I never heard, till yesterday, that my marriage had been published. My sister was the first to tell me. It occurred after I had sailed, and I have no doubt was inserted, by Despencer or Bentley, solely to deceive you. My friends, it appears, caused it to be promptly contradicted; but I suppose that the paper, in which the contradiction appeared, was purposely kept out of your sight. The lady, to whom the notice married me, has been, for more than a year, betrothed to a very intimate friend of mine, and has since been married. She and I have known each other from childhood. She is like a second sister to me. Had she been in town, last year, she would have called on you, and then this miserable mistake could never have occurred."

I hid my face again on his broad chest, as he drew me tenderly toward him. I thought of my jealousy, when I had seen him driving her out,

and was glad to conceal the blushes, which I felt burning in my cheek.

"I knew you were living with Georgianna," he continued. "But I little suspected that your uncle had discarded you: for some reason or other the Elliots kept that part of their conduct secret. They have reaped as they have sown, however. Yesterday, I learned that the present crisis has carried your uncle down: he is a bankrupt, if not worse——"

I started.

"Not ruined?" I cried.

"Yes! utterly."

The news stunned me for an instant. Then I thought of Rosalie.

"We will seek her at once," he said, in answer to my question. "I was going, as I have already said, to start to-morrow to visit you. I had supposed that you had returned to your uncle's long ago, and would have sought you, before coming here, if it had not been for a letter from my sister, which I could answer only in person. When I heard, from Bella, of your uncle's failure, I was anxious to set off by the next train, but was detained till to-night, by the same imperative business that brought me here. God knows I little thought, when I was loitering idly over Europe, what you were suffering."

"I deserve it all," I murmured, again hiding my face. "You were right and I was wrong."

"We were both wrong, and both right, darling," was his answer. "I was too imperious, and we were both too proud. We are older and wiser now, I trust. But I have my confession to make also, and it is this, that the more I reflected on your motive for standing by Georgianna, the nobler your character appeared. I went to Europe, because I was too proud to seek you, and yet could not forget you: but I long since regretted my going; and though I too have had doubts whether I was loved any longer, I returned at last to put it to the test."

"You shall be my guide, my master henceforth," I whispered, looking up into his face. "I have never been happy since that fatal morning."

He bent down and kissed me reverently.

"God deal with me," he said, with solemn accents, "as I deal by you." And thus were we, a second time, betrothed.

A carriage was now heard driving up the road. "That is my sister," said Mr. Talbot, "I will bring her here directly," and he ran out.

I was all confusion. But I appreciated the tact which instinctively told Mr. Talbot to delay the meeting till he had made the necessary explanations; and the respite gave me time to recover myself in some measure.

In a very few minutes, the sister came running in, a gentle likeness of her brother, still pretty, though a widow. Taking me to her heart, as if I had been a younger sister, she won my confidence and affection at once.

"There now, Talbot, go away," she said, "we'll see you, by-and-bye, at the tea-table; but meanwhile Margaret must come with me, for I have the children to show her, little dears, besides a thousand other things."

Speaking thus, she carried me into a charming chamber, which was fragrant with flowers, and which overlooked the wide valley, that was now darkening with the shades of twilight. Here, after busying herself about for awhile, in order, as she said, to make things more comfortable, she left me to myself, promising to summon me in about an hour.

The first thing I did, when the door closed behind her, was to give way to a hearty fit of crying. Then I washed my eyes, smoothed my hair, and had just finished rearranging my dress, when I heard a light tap at the door. It was my hostess with her two children, bright, demonstrative little girls, who made friends with me immediately: and one of whom strikingly reminded me of Rosalie. In five minutes I was as much at home with this darling as if I had known her all my life.

"Don't you think Hemlock Farm picturesque?" the mother said, directly, going to the window. "We consider the view, down the valley, very fine. The place is the old homestead, you know; but Talbot lent it to me, when I and these little ones were left alone." Here her voice quivered for an instant. But directly she went on. "My affairs are now settled, however, and, after this winter, we shall live in the city, and Talbot will take the old homestead back. It has always been his favorite summer resort. But there is the tea-bell."

I could lengthen out my story, but why should I? Mr. Talbot and I have now been married for several years. Our winters are spent in the city, our summers at Hemlock Farm. My husband has been called, more than once, to take part in the councils of his state and nation; but he always finds a few months of leisure for our mountain home.

The children, who have grown around us, love the old place as much as their parents do. We are a happy family, especially when Mr. Talbot's sister, with her two girls, joins us, as she does, for a few weeks, every summer.

For Rosalie lives with us. I have adopted her as my own child. Mr. Talbot fulfilled his promise, sought out the Elliots, and finding that

they were reduced to the extreme poverty, had little difficulty in persuading them to surrender their daughter. My uncle and aunt, indeed, survived their loss of fortune less than a year. They were unable to bear what they thought the disgrace of indigence, and died of what some would call broken hearts, in consequence.

Despencer never reappeared in the United States. After the discovery of the gold mines in California, a man, answering to his description, was lynched on the Sacramento for stealing another miner's claim; but we were never positive that this was Georgianna's husband.

Old Jane died in prison, while I was lying sick. On everybody, except myself, who had lived in the old stone mansion, since the night of the first awful tragedy there, the parricidal curse seemed to have fallen; for all had perished prematurely. The mansion itself is now a roofless ruin, through whose open casements the winds and rain beat, and whose very stones are slimy with damp and decay. But the sombre pines still stand, like mourners, about it; and as they sob and groan in the winter blasts, give color to the popular tradition, now more positive than ever, that the place is haunted.

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THE RISING TIDE.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

CHAPTER I.

"WHITHER do you ride to-day, my dear?" said Mrs. Florence to her daughter, as the latter, attired in a handsome equestrian dress, entered the parlor.

"I don't know, mamma—just where the fancy of the moment takes me," replied the daughter, stooping to kiss her mother's forehead, and then proceeding to arrange her riding hat before the mirror.

"Do not go far, my child. I never see you venture out thus alone without a presentiment that something is to happen."

"But you have so many presentiments, and all to no purpose," gaily replied her daughter, "that I think we can afford to disregard them by this time. Yet, mamma," she said, approaching her parent again, and throwing a fair arm fondly around the neck of that loved object, "if it really alarms you, I will give up riding."

The widowed mother looked up fondly at her beautiful child, and kissing her, said—

"No, no, Alice, you shall not deprive yourself of almost the sole pleasure left to you. Pursue your daily rides. In this primitive district, so far removed from the high roads of commerce, there can be no real peril in riding out unattended: it is an idle, foolish fear on my part: only as you were always accustomed, in your dear father's life, to have a servant when you rode, it seems odd to see you now without one: that is all; I dare say I shall soon get accustomed to it, as to other sacrifices."

"Never think of it as a sacrifice again, mamma," replied the beautiful girl. "Nothing is a sacrifice to me, while I have you left."

"God bless you, Alice," answered the mother. "I am glad that, notwithstanding the reverses, you can still keep your beautiful Arab."

Alice for reply put her arm around her mother's waist, and drew her to the window. A superb white steed, ready caparisoned, and held by the sole male servant of the establishment, who officiated as groom and gardener both, stood pawing the earth in front of the cottage.

"Is he not beautiful?" said Alice, enthusiastically. "I do believe, dear mamma, that, next to you, I love Arab better than anything on earth. How fleetly he carries me! How boldly we leap the ditches and fences in our way! Oh! mamma, there is nothing so exhilarating as to gallop over the hills on a bracing October morning like this, and as you reach each new acclivity, catch a taste of the sea-breeze that drifts far inland, when the wind, as now, is from the east. And then, to pull up on some lofty height, and see glimpses of the ocean away in the distance, with perchance a sail whitening his dark, green bosom. Nothing, nothing makes the blood so dance in the veins, or fills the heart with equal exultation!"

The parent looked up admiringly at her child as the latter thus spoke: and indeed others, less favorably prejudiced, might have done the same. Alice was one of those tall, aristocratic-looking creatures, who, notwithstanding a certain slenderness, realized, perhaps, the highest ideal of female beauty. Her figure was of the lordly Norman type, and perfect in its proportions; while every movement was graceful, yet dignified. Her face was of that almost divine beauty which we see in the Beatrice Cenci of Guido. The same dazzling complexion, the same blue eyes, the same golden hair; but combined with these also the same air of high resolve and almost masculine courage chiseled about the lines of the brow and mouth. Her countenance, always lovely, was now transcendantly beautiful, for it glowed all over with enthusiasm.

Her mother, we have said, looked up at her fondly. Mrs. Florence, the widow of a Boston merchant, supposed to be a millionaire while living, but whose estate after his death scarcely yielded a surplus sufficient to afford his wife and only child a bare subsistence, was a woman of a loving, tender heart, but without any of that masculine strength of character which Alice inherited from the father. But for Alice, the widow would have broken down under the loss of a dearly loved husband and the unexpected revulsion of fortune. It was Alice who comforted the despairing Mrs. Florence; who planned their removal to the economical district where they now lived; and who, by constantly denying herself a thousand little accustomed luxuries, managed to make their scanty income sufficient for their support. The widowed mother not only loved her as a daughter, but looked up to her unconsciously as an adviser.

"Well, my dear," said Mrs. Florence, with a sigh, "if you enjoy your rides—that is all! But I am sure I had rather be sitting here, looking at my flowers, than galloping over the finest country in the world. But you are just like your dear father, who was the boldest and handsomest rider of his day."

"Good bye, mamma," said Alice, laughingly, "if I stay to hear myself praised, I shall be spoiled." And with the words she broke from her parent, left the apartment, and was seen the next moment running lightly down the steps, daintily holding her riding-skirt up with her small, but heavily gloved hand. With the nimbleness of a deer she vaulted into the saddle, gathered up the reins with a firm hand, and nodding a gay adieu to her mother, was off, her spirited steed scattering the gravel right and left from beneath his hoofs.

"Dear child," said her mother, thus left alone, "may heaven protect thee. Yet it sometimes seems," she added, with a sigh, "as if I was destined to lose my Alice. I love her too much, to keep her with me. And yet, oh! Father in heaven," she continued, lifting her eyes, now dimmed with tears, above, "spare thou this, my only comfort on earth; temper the wind to the shorn lamb, and leave me something for which to hope."

CHAPTER II.

A succession of inviting views, one following another as hill after hill was surmounted, had lured Alice on, until, on reaching a lofty elevation she was surprised to see an unknown view of the ocean rolling in almost at her feet. For the first time since she set out she became aware how far

she had gone. She drew forth her delicate little watch, one of the few relics of better days which she had retained, and was surprised to find that nearly three hours had elapsed since she left home. The country about was entirely strange to her. Never before had she protracted her ride so far. She had not intended to be absent three hours in all, and she began immediately to reproach herself, for she knew that long before she could return, her mother would be alarmed at her prolonged delay.

Just then a lad driving a wagon to mill appeared in sight. She accosted him and asked the distance to B——, in whose suburbs her mother's cottage was located. The boy answered that the distance, by the high road, was twenty miles.

"Twenty miles!" said Alice, in despair. "Surely there must be some shorter road."

"Oh! yes, ma'am, there is," replied the lad, "to them, as goes by the beach: it saves a matter of six miles."

"And how do you reach the beach?" asked Alice.

"You turn off at the double house yonder, and keep down the lane until you come out on the shore; then, follow the beach as far as you can—it is three miles or so—when you will reach the high road again, just by Wallington Church."

"Thank you," cried Alice, too eager to get home to stop for further explanations; and, as she spoke, she gave her spirited steed a cut with the riding-whip, which made him spring almost from under her. The next instant she was galloping toward the lane that led to the sea-shore. The lad looked after her in stupid wonder: he had never seen anything half so beautiful or brave. "I reckon," he cried, "that's one of the circus riders, from Bosting, that Jim talks about."

The morning had been so far clear, though the atmosphere, for more than twenty-four hours, had foreboded a storm. A bracing, north-east wind had been blowing the preceding night, as well as all day; and had been steadily increasing. Alice had not noticed this, however, until she drew up to speak to the boy. As she turned to descend toward the ocean, the screen of woods and hills that had hitherto protected her was suddenly removed, when the violence of the gale almost took her hat from her head. She cared little for this, however, but stooped forward to breast the tempest, and dashed rapidly down the hill, knowing that her course, when she once reached the beach, would bring the wind on her back. She scarcely looked up until her horse's hoofs, ceasing to clatter on the rocky descent, struck the firm, smooth sand of the beach: but when she did, and for the first time gazed

seaward, she could scarcely restrain a cry of alarm, courageous as she was.

Low, leaden-colored clouds driving rapidly in from the eastward, had completely shut out the sunshine and involved the entire scene in gloom. Beneath this foreboding sky the wild waves were trooping onward toward the beach, mountain-high, and everywhere whitened with foam. Still, after a moment's reflection, Alice saw nothing to fear. The lad knew the country well, as his words showed, and he would not have recommended this road to her if there was danger. And how could there be danger? She might get wet, if it came on to rain, but that was all: and, to recompense for this, what was more glorious than the sight of the ocean in a storm! These were her hasty reflections, as she drew in her rein and hesitated: then, urging on her steed, she started for a gallop along the beach.

For a mile she maintained an unbroken pace. The smooth road under foot, the breeze that would have been too sharp for anything but a gallop, and the roar of the tremendous surf that broke beside her gave a wild exhilaration to the spirits of the bold rider, which all can comprehend who have been, like her, on horseback, amid the raging of the elements. On, on she dashed, her veil flying behind her, her cheek flushed with excitement. Suddenly a jutting rock presented itself, to the foot of which the billows nearly approached. She did not hesitate. Something told her that a clear road lay beyond; and, with a word of encouragement to her half-affrighted horse, she dashed through, the waves wetting the hoofs of the smoking steed.

She was not mistaken. The cliff she had just passed formed the southern end of a deep, horse-shoe-like indentation of the coast; and now a wide, level beach, about two miles in extent, opened before her. This beach was terminated, at its northern extremity, by a high rock, that rose like a wall more than two hundred feet above the sands. Alice's first look, after she had scanned the beach, was at this cliff, to see if the road beneath was passable. To her joy she beheld a strong stretch of sand, with boulders scattered here and there, between the foot of the rock and the sea; and, on a second scrutiny, she saw a plainly defined water-mark, traced by the sea-weed by the last tide, at least three hundred feet distant from the precipice.

"Now, Arab," she said, exultingly, at this sight, "fly, fly, my brave friend, and we shall be home before the dinner hour after all. Beyond yonder promontory lies the spire of Wallington, and from thence it is scarcely an hour's gallop to the cottage."

The noble animal seemed to understand her, and to have participated both in her momentary fear, and in her present joy; he spurned the sands with his rapid hoofs, and fairly flew along his path.

Half the distance had already been traversed, when Alice, who had been watching in proud admiration the scud whitening the ocean every where, turned her glance toward the promontory. What was her horror to behold the water-mark already obliterated by the advancing tide, which boiled and foamed around the huge boulders now fast disappearing! She had forgotten to estimate the influence of the gale in throwing in an unusually high surf, as also to reflect that as the beach was comparatively level, a very small rise in the tide would submerge it; but both these things now rushed upon her mind, and, brave as she was, she turned pale with terror, as she checked her horse.

"What is to be done?" she cried aloud, involuntarily. "At the rate at which the tide is coming in, the foot of the promontory will be impassable by the time I reach it. I will retrace my steps," she said, with instant decision, "that is my only chance."

She turned her horse's head as she spoke, but what was her dismay when she beheld the road by the southern promontory already buried in the wild waters, that breaking at its foot, threw their spray half way up the precipitous ascent. Escape, by either way, she saw impossible. The reins dropped from her hands, which she clasped to her face.

"Oh! mother, mother," she cried, "who shall break to you the tidings? Who shall dare carry my drowned corpse to your door, even if the ocean should cast it ashore?"

But it was not in the nature of Alice to submit silently to death, while even a ray of hope remained. The promontory ahead was yet unreached by the waters, and, if she spared no time in pushing forward, it might not be entirely impassable. Even though the tide should be at its base, Arab could swim, and a bold rider might force him through. At any rate this was the only prospect of escape. Blaming herself for the momentary halt, by which precious moments had been lost, she urged her faithful animal to his utmost speed. Arab darted forward like a gull shooting down the wind, and Alice, with pale cheeks and compressed lips, awaited the result.

Swifter and swifter the gallant steed swept over the sands; but nearer and wilder came the advancing tide to the foot of the cliff. Alice saw, with breathless horror, that the waves would cover the path before she could reach it; but

nevertheless she pressed on with high resolve of a courageous heart, that does its utmost even in moments of despair. The critical point was still more than two hundred yards distant, when a tremendous breaker hurled itself against the base of the cliff, flinging its white cold spray up the face of the rock as high as the yard-arm of a first rate man-of-war. Another and another wave followed, submerging the sands entirely, and half burying even those of the boulders that lay close in by the cliff. Yet still Alice urged on her steed. Snorting wildly, Arab would have shrunk back, but his mistress, encouraging him with her voice, pushed him at the pass. A breaker had just spent itself, and was receding: she thought this a favorable moment; and she struck her steed sharply with her whip. He sprang forward gallantly, and had already passed what she thought the critical point, when, to her despair, she saw that the waters bathed the feet of the cliff for at least fifty yards further on.

Her hopes sank within her. She felt the blood coursing back to her heart; and her heart itself seemed to cease beating. A chill horror overcame all her nerves. Yet mechanically she still urged Arab forward. A second breaker, however, thundering in at this moment almost swept the faithful animal from his feet, and nearly flung Alice from the saddle, her hat falling off in the concussion. No longer able to keep her seat unassisted, she grasped the neck of her steed mechanically with her right hand, while, with distended eyes, she gazed on a third billow that was now roaring in toward her. On came this mountainous wave, towering, towering, towering, until its dark and glistening front rose almost perpendicularly overhead. Alice was breathless with horror. Suddenly a speck of foam appeared at one extremity of this long wall of water; it ran swiftly along the top, curling over as it advanced; and then, with a roar as of a hundred batteries, the huge mass plunged headlong, burying steed and rider from sight in a whirlwind of foam. A wild shrill scream of a woman, lost in the shriek of a horse in his last agony, rose over the howling of the wind and the cry of the frightened gulls; and then all, the moment after, were overwhelmed in the thunder of the breaker.

CHAPTER III.

On the morning of that day a pleasure yacht, the property of a young Bostonian of fortune, was returning from the last cruise of the season. The experienced pilot saw, in the gathering clouds eastward, the impending storm, and advised that all sail should be made at once for the nearest

harbor. Accordingly the helm was put up, and the course laid for Wallington Bay, which happened to be under the lee.

A gay party it was on board of that yacht. Fortune had showered her gifts on all present, but on none more than on Arthur Mordaunt, the owner of the dashing little craft. As he sat now in the midst of his guests, towering half a head above the tallest, with his handsome and intelligent countenance lighted up with the excitement of conversation, he presented the beau ideal of manly beauty. The sailor's dress in which all were attired, particularly became Mordaunt, especially the low, Byron collar which revealed a throat that might have come from the chisel of Praxitiles.

"I wonder you have never married, Mordaunt," said one of his friends, lighting a fresh cigar. "Honestly, I believe you would be far happier: you were made for that sort of thing; only we should lose this pleasant yachting, and faith! I should be sorry for that."

"You need not be alarmed, my dear fellow," replied Mordaunt. "I shall never marry until I am really in love; and I have yet to see the woman who has permanently touched my heart. Flirtations one has by dozens; but love is a different matter."

"You are fastidious!" replied another of his guests.

"Who does not know that?" interposed the first speaker. "What dwelling is so *recherche* as Mordaunt's bachelor establishment? What horses are so choice? What yacht is so beautiful? The fact is, Mordaunt wants a wife who shall be more than mortal; so I think our bachelor yachting is likely to last till he dies of old age."

"Oh! I should not give up yachting," replied Mordaunt, laughing, "even if I were married, though, perhaps, I should be more select in my invitations, for I would take my wife along."

"The deuce you would?" cried several in a breath.

"Yes! and there's the point, answered Mordaunt. "When I marry, I wish a wife who is both beautiful and brave; one who can grace a ball-room, yet is not afraid to back a horse or steer a yacht—"

"An amazon, in short," cried all, with a roar of laughter, "what the Parisians call *lionnes*."

"Oh! no, no," said Mordaunt. "Above all things I detest the *lionnes*. I knew one in Paris, who swam in a bet with another in the Seine—she was a perfect human monster, neither man nor woman—faugh! it makes me angry to think of her. Now my taste is for a woman who is feminine at all times, but yet is not a coward:

one who can share my passion for out-of-door exercises, yet not cease to be a lady. There are plenty of such in England. But here, too frequently, our females are either hot-house plants, or flaunting sun-flowers——”

“And, by George,” said one, interrupting him, “yonder goes a horsewoman who is bold enough, and, as well as I can judge at this distance, beautiful enough too. I would not be in her peril for a thousand dollars.”

All eyes followed the direction of the speaker's finger, and beheld, at the distance of more than a mile, a solitary female on horseback, riding under the cliffs along the beach.

Mordaunt seized the spy-glass, and took a long look at Alice, for she it was.

“She is beautiful as an Houri,” he said, shutting the telescope,” and as brave as Zenobia. But she is in imminent peril. The tide is making so fast that it will soon render the promontory ahead impassable, and return by the way she came is already cut off by the waters.”

“Good God!—what is to be done?” cried another, who had meantime been using the glass.

“We must put about,” said Mordaunt. “We are already to leeward of the point, and shall have difficulty to beat up, at least in time to assist her; but we must try.”

The pilot here ventured to hint that the yacht might be beached, if any such hazardous experiment was tried.

“I don't care for the yacht,” said Mordaunt, “but I think there is no danger. We'll beat up till we get to windward of the point, when I'll take the life-boat and leave you. Two of the crew will answer my purpose. As sure as there is a heaven, that courageous girl, unless we do this, will be drowned.”

“And even that can't save her,” said the pilot.

The yacht, however, was put about, and lying close to the wind, soon began to regain precious ground. As she plunged into the head-seas, every spar straining and timber creaking, the cheek of more than one on board blanched; but no one ventured to remonstrate. All felt, with Mordaunt himself, that the duty to attempt a rescue demanded a risk.

“Ah! she sees her danger now,” cried one, “she stops, she looks back, she hesitates. And now she has decided, for she dashes forward, even fleetlier than before!”

“Gallant creature,” cried Mordaunt, “she is worth risking a dozen lives for! Most of her sex would have stopped, paralyzed with terror, till the tide was upon her; but she sees her only chance, and loses not a second in availing herself of it.”

The most breathless suspense now ensued. The yacht and Alice were rapidly approaching each other from opposite points. The former, however, was still comparatively far from the promontory, when the first breaker cut off the escape of Alice.

“Launch the boat,” cried Mordaunt, eagerly. “Jack, you and Bill accompany me. We must trust to our oars.”

“How nobly she dashes at the pass,” cried one of his friends. “Did you see that cut with the whip? There she seizes the opportunity when the wave has receded; she thinks there is but a few yards to pass instead of that long stretch of sand; ah! now she beholds the real extent of the peril; there, a breaker nearly buries her; no! she still holds on, but her hat is gone; she cannot longer control her affrighted horse; God of heaven that roller has buried her forever!”

An awful silence succeeded these breathless words. The life-boat was not yet launched, and Mordaunt still remained on deck. He was pale with excitement. Every eye was fixed on the spot where Alice had disappeared; but an age seemed to pass before the huge breaker rolled backward. At last, the receding waters disclosed the steed struggling in the undertow; but his fearless rider was gone. Her hat alone was seen floating out in the breakers.

“It is all over, you can do no good,” cried several, “that sea will drown you, Mordaunt.”

By this time the boat was rocking aside, and her crew stood ready for their leader, if he determined to go.

“I will recover her body at least, or die,” said Mordaunt, as he leaped aboard the slight cockleshell. “Give way, my lads.”

The little craft shot off, and held stubbornly on its way, now appearing, now disappearing, as the huge billows sunk and rose between it and the yacht. We shall leave the latter and follow Mordaunt.

Nearly ten minutes elapsed before the boat reached the vicinity where Alice had disappeared, a period that seemed an hour to Mordaunt. The surf was now breaking high all round the promontory, and this, combined with the boulders scattered about, rendered approach to the spot perilous in the extreme. When as close in as it was deemed prudent to go, Mordaunt half rose and looked round.

“Yonder is the horse; poor fellow he is dead,” he cried, after a moment. “He has drifted past the point and into Wallington Bay. We must seek there for the lady too; for a strong current seems to set in that direction. Ha! what is that? A skirt floating on the water—it is she—now, a

hundred dollars a-piece, lads, for doing your best—give way, give way.”

The stout oaken oars almost snapped, so sinewy were the efforts of the crew, and the boat shot rapidly forward. Rapidly Mordaunt neared the inanimate form, whose identity was no longer doubtful. Utterly careless of danger, for but one thought now possessed him, that of rescuing the body, in the hope that life might not yet be quite extinct, he steered the boat right in among the breakers, following the helpless form of Alice.

He reached the body, and attempted to grasp it. But it eluded his grasp, and the boat, no longer steered by a skilful hand, whirled over. On the instant, Mordaunt and her crew were tumbling in the breakers. But the men, as if anticipating what would have been their leader's commands, grasped at the cords that hung from the sides of the craft, and thus held her firmly; while Mordaunt, luckily a bold and powerful swimmer, dived after the disappearing figure of Alice. He was fortunate in grasping the skirt of her dress almost immediately; but, the next moment, a new breaker overwhelmed them and both disappeared from sight.

Meantime, however, the boat and her crew had been carried in on the preceding surge; and the boat having been righted dexterously, was now heading the breakers, to go in search of Mordaunt. The men soon caught sight of their leader, as, holding Alice with one arm, while, with the other he steered his way, he rode inward on a third breaker. The boat shot like an arrow toward him; he grasped one of her cords; and, on the instant, the crew sprang out, dragging her toward the beach. The manœuvre was executed so skilfully and rapidly that, when the fourth breaker rolled in, it did not submerge the party, nor was the undertow afterward sufficient to carry them out again to sea. Before a fifth surge could overtake them, they were safely landed on the dry beach.

CHAPTER IV.

FORTUNATELY a farm-house was in sight, close to the shore of the bay, and thither Mordaunt hastened with his inanimate burden. Alice, to all appearance, was lifeless; but he reflected that persons, who had been in the water even longer than she, were sometimes recovered; and he was resolved not to despair until every effort at resuscitation had been tried in vain. As he gazed on the pallid face that rested on his shoulders, he said involuntarily aloud, “surely so much loveliness cannot perish thus.”

One of the men had ran before to announce the accident, so that when Mordaunt approached

with his burden, the farmer's wife and her two daughters were standing at the door with anxious faces.

“This way—this way,” cried the dame, opening the door of the best chamber, which, as customary in that section of the country, was on the first floor, “poor, dear creature—God grant she may yet have life!”

It would be impossible to describe the anxiety with which Mordaunt paced up and down the wide hall of the old house, while the females of the family were engaged in their sacred task of endeavoring to resuscitate the inanimate Alice. Minute after minute elapsed, yet nothing was heard from the bed-room. It seemed to Mordaunt as if an hour had passed, when the door was, at last, opened.

“What news?” he cried, springing forward and seizing the dame's hand. “Does she live?”

“She does!” was the answer.

“Thank God!” cried Mordaunt, and his nerves, overwrought by the incidents of the morning, gave way: for a moment he felt the weakness of a woman; and he turned away to hide a gush of tears.

When Alice had sufficiently revived to be sensible, her first inquiry was after her mother. She told her name, and begged that some one might be sent for her parent. Mordaunt, who watched still outside the chamber-door, offered to gallop himself on the service, if a horse could be found. The dame said there was a spare beast in the stable, and fortunately a good one: at which Mordaunt, saddling the animal himself, left the house on his errand.

When he reached the cottage of Mrs. Florence his horse was all in a foam. He flung himself off and hurried in. What was his astonishment to recognize, where he had expected to see a stranger, the intimate friend of his deceased mother, the widow of his father's old partner! But his surprise was not greater than that of Mrs. Florence. Alice, however, was the first thought of the parent. Already alarmed by her daughter's protracted absence, the wet dress of her visitor woke all her maternal fears.

“My child,” she cried. “Oh! Mr. Mordaunt, do you come from my child?”

“She is alive—and in no danger,” said Mordaunt, and then in a few rapid words he told his errand. Before half an hour, a carriage had been procured, and Mordaunt was accompanying Mrs. Florence to see her daughter.

That afternoon Alice was sufficiently recovered to sit up. Her mother had brought part of a wardrobe with her, and the patient, attired in a neat *neglige* dress, which made her all the more

lovely from its reminding the spectator of the danger she had escaped, waited to receive and thank Mordaunt. The latter had been meantime to Wallington, where his yacht lay at anchor, and had exchanged his wet, sailor's attire, for the simple black dress of a gentleman.

When the door opened, and Mordaunt entered, the blushes that dyed the cheeks of Alice rendered her beautiful beyond comparison. She looked up at Mordaunt, with eyes beaming unutterable gratitude, but, unable to find words, she burst into tears.

"She is nervous yet," said Mrs. Florence, drawing Alice to her bosom, "why, my dear child, where is all your courage?"

But Mordaunt was scarcely less composed. He had trembled like a leaf as he took the hand of Alice; and these tears destroyed what little self-command he had left. When next Alice looked up, and her eyes tremblingly met his, his own

dropped before her gaze. Ah! where was the bravery of either? Love had made both cowards. The great peril they had that day shared together, combined with Mordaunt's admiration for her bold spirit, stood in the place of months of intimacy, and they already loved.

It was nearly a year, however, before Mordaunt was allowed, in due course, to woo, to sue for, and to wed Alice. And a happy couple they have made! Their splendid mansion is seen in the most fashionable street of Boston, and their country-seat overlooks the ocean from one of the choicest spots in the vicinity. Every luxury, in short, that wealth can bring, is theirs. Nor is this all. The most perfect sympathy reigns between them. Alice is still as bold an equestrian as ever, and has become as resolute a sailor as her husband; but she is not the less the belle of the ball-room, or, better than all, the tender companion of the social hearth.

THE SEAMSTRESS.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

"Hark! that rustle of a dress,
 Stiff with lavish costliness!
 Here comes one whose cheek would flush,
 But to have her garment brush
 'Gainst the girl whose fingers thin
 Wove the weary broderie in,
 Bending backward from her toil,
 Lest her tears the silk might soil,
 And, in midnight's chill and murk,
 Stitched her life into the work,
 Shaping from her bitter thought
 Heart's-ease and forget-me-not,
 Satirizing her despair
 With the emblems woven there."—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

THE clock had struck midnight, yet still the seamstress toiled on, though her fingers were long since weary, and her heart sad almost unto death. Her candle flickered low in its socket, and at last flared up as if about to go out; she rose and lit another, and still toiled on. The sleet drove against the window pane, rattling like shot upon the frosty glass, and the step of the sleepy watchman without was the sole sound that echoed in the street: the whole city lay dumb; yet still she toiled on. She had a piece of work which it was necessary to finish by the next day, and so, though hungry, and sick, and spiritless, she was forced to toil on.

The tread of the watchman grew fainter; the tempest deepened; and at last the hour of one struck. The scanty fire, which had warmed that miserable apartment, had expired two hours before, and cold chills began to steal over the thinly clad inhabitant. She cast a wistful glance at the dead embers on the hearth, turned over her work to see how much remained, and sighing heavily, resumed her needle. And thus, hour after hour that lonely and friendless orphan, toiled on.

Left fatherless and motherless she tried to keep up a brave heart, and, as long as her health lasted, had succeeded. But her incessant labors gradually undermined her strength. Her constitution, overtasked, gave way. She became thin and pale; and sometimes was troubled with a hectic cough. The severe winter, finally, had brought on a temporary illness, during which her last penny had been exhausted; and it was not without great exertions, for work was scarce, that she had, on her recovery, obtained something to do. That which she had in hand was to be finished in an incredibly short time; but anything was better than starvation; and she had thankfully undertaken the task.

The night wore on. The storm raged fiercer and more icy; and the poor girl shivered now continually. Still the piece of work was far from finished. At last, tears began to fall on her lap, at first slowly and heavily like the first drops of a thunder shower, then faster and faster. Finally she sobbed convulsively. She could no longer sew; her emotion was

too great: so she laid down her work, and gave free vent to weeping.

"Oh! Father in Heaven," she cried, lifting her clasped hands above, and looking upward with streaming eyes, "is there no relief from this? Must I still suffer, and struggle, in body and soul? Better I were dead. But no! no! that is a sinful wish. Teach me to say, 'thy will be done.'"

Renewed sobs choked her utterance, and burying her face in her hands, she wept with a violence that shook the frail chair in which she was sitting. At last the tempest of her grief gradually died away; her sobs grew less and less frequent; and, finally, were heard only at intervals, like those of a child which has cried itself to sleep. Exhausted nature had given way. She slumbered.

And as she slept she dreamed. Oh! bless God for dreams. They come to the bed of care, and poverty, and anguish, soothing the worn-out struggler, and stringing the soul anew for the strife of the morrow. The rich and prosperous know not what the luxury of dreaming is. But, in dreams, the famished beggar sits at the full board; the bankrupt forgets his shame, and surrounds his wife and children once more with wealth; and the mourner beholds again the smile of the loved one, and clasps the wife, or daughter to his throbbing heart.

She dreamed. At first, however, her dream was not a pleasant one. The actual wove itself too much into the ideal; and her thoughts were still of cold, and hunger, and weariness. She fancied herself wandering over a wide common, which was covered with snow so deep that, at every step, she drew her breath with more and more difficulty. Yet she struggled on. At last she could stem the driving sleet and wade through the gathering drifts no longer; and, completely exhausted, she sank down against a bank.

As she thus dreamed, her head, which had rested between her hands on the back of her chair, fell over against the wall, and, in this easier position, she slept more peacefully. A smile gradually stole over her mild features. She started slightly occasionally, and murmured low words, like a child calling its mother in its slumbers. The storm, meantime, had ceased

without, and the wind, lately so violent, now moaned low and plaintively; while the musical chaunt of the watchman crying, "three o'clock and a starlight morning," sounded sweet and cheerful after the roar of the spent tempest.

She was dreaming as she smiled. The waste of snow had disappeared, and the icy bank on which she leaned; and in their place a field of fragrant spring flowers opened before her sight, and she sat on a soft, mossy seat. The gurgling of waters, hurrying over pebbles, and the morning songs of birds were in her ears. The dew glittered among the grass, trembled on the leaf of the rose, or pattered to the earth with a low, musical sound as the breeze stirred the trees around her. A pleasant, but subdued radiance was over the whole landscape: and oh! how light and happy her heart felt.

Morning began to dawn, but still she slept—yes! blessed be God she slept. The gray dawn stole into the room, at first timidly, lingering at the window and nestling close around her form; but finally venturing further into the chamber, exploring every corner, and penetrating into each crevice as the morning advanced. It was now broad day. Bitter, bitter cold was it, even in that room; but the overwearied slumberer still slept on. She had dreamed again, and now she was happier than ever.

For, as she gazed around that beautiful landscape, the light had seemed to brighten; and she saw two figures approaching her hand in hand, whom she recognized immediately as her father and mother. She would have sprang to meet them, but an invincible, though delicious lassitude had stolen over her; and she waited till they came up. How her heart beat when she saw them suddenly behold her, and with a glad cry rush forward and clasp her in their arms. A smile of exquisite delight wreathed her lips as she smiled; and in her sleep she looked like an angel.

The dawn brightened. The winter sun came forth, sharp and clear, and shooting into the room brought everything out distinctly. A ray lingering around the head of the sleeper and glittering on her hair, crowned her as with a halo of glory, and made her look even more beatified than before.

At this moment the door opened, and an old woman entered, followed by a boy. It was the keeper of the house, attended by the lad sent for the work.

"Hush!" said the woman, as soon as she saw her lodger. "Poor thing! she has sunk to sleep exhausted. It is a pity to wake her."

"Are you sure she is asleep?" said the boy, in a low, thrilling whisper, as, advancing into the room, he obtained a full look at her face. And he shrank back.

The woman started, looked wonderingly at the lad, and then, by a sudden impulse, crossed the room on tip-toe, and laid her hand on the shoulder of the sleeper.

But the next instant she drew it quickly away as if the touch had shot an ice-bolt to her heart.

"She is dead!" said the lad, awe-struck.

"She is with the angels—thank God," said the woman, bursting into tears. "I knew it would come to this, but did not think it would be so soon, or I might have saved her by sharing my own scant fire and crust with her. But yet, thank God!"

Yes! cold, and hunger, and weariness had done their work. Her prayer had been kindly answered, and she had found relief. The dream had passed into a reality; the re-union with her parents was not all a vision; but at what moment the ideal had changed into the real, and the freed soul "walked in Paradise," who can tell?

She had found relief. But there are others, almost, if not quite as destitute, who still struggle and struggle on. Is there no one to care for these?

THE BLACK ROVER.

A STORY OF THE WEST INDIES

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

CHAPTER I.

"And now the storm blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong."

Ancient Mariner.

It was towards the close of a summer day in 1816, when a trim-looking brigantine might have been seen bowling along in the latitude of the Bahamas. The model of this vessel was of the most exquisite proportions; and her appearance showed her to be a man-of-war. Her hull was long, low in the water, and almost as sharp as a needle; and was painted everywhere of a deep black, relieved only by the blood-red ports—for she carried six brass carronades of a side, besides a long twenty-four pounder amidships. Her masts were tall and taper, and raked backwards with a saucy air. As she glided along the smooth surface of the deep, propelled by a gentle breeze, she seemed some creation of magic, so noiseless and graceful was her movement. Groups of men were visible leaning motionless over her sides, while a solitary sailor on the fore-topsail yard, splicing a rope, added to the careless ease of the picture.

Lazily leaning over the bulwarks on the quarter-deck were two individuals, both wearing the undress uniforms of officers in the American navy. One of them was quite a boy, and had the equipments of a midshipman; the other was of maturer years, though still young. The latter person might be about twenty-five years of age; was tall in person, with a face of much manly beauty; and had that indescribable air of command which the possession of authority invariably gives. In a word, he was the chief officer of the brigantine, though his rank in the navy was but that of a lieutenant.

"I do not like this sky," he said, addressing his companion, who was his half-brother, "You can see nothing peculiar in it, I warrant, James; and yet it looks as if a white squall was brewing. I may as well look at the barometer."

"You do not mean to say that a storm is at hand; I can not see a cloud in the sky."

"Nevertheless I have known an afternoon close in a hurricane in this latitude," he said, as he turned to descend the gangway.

He had not been absent more than a few seconds, when he re-appeared on deck with every mark of excitement in his countenance. His first words were—

"All hands shorten sail. A white squall is coming up. Quick for your lives."

He pointed, as he spoke, to a small cloud which had suddenly appeared on the very edge of the horizon, and which was not larger, apparently, than a man's hand. Most of the sailors had seen such a cloud before, and they looked grave; all sprang to their posts, and in a few minutes the vessel was denuded of every rag.

By this time, short as the interval had been, the cloud had increased to a frightful size, and its dark, ominous shadow fell upon the waters like a pall. In a few minutes the sun was obscured, and the brigantine lay rocking in the blackness; while fast and threatening that gloomy cloud spread itself right and left along the seaboard, and extended to the zenith.

"There it comes," at last said Jack Transom, the coxswain of the captain, "hold on, shipmates, for your lives."

The words had scarcely left his mouth, when a strange, awful sound was heard far down in the direction whence the squall was coming; gradually it approached nearer and grew more distinct; the ocean groaned; the heavens were like night; and finally, with the roar of a thousand batteries, the tempest broke upon the vessel. For some seconds, the crew could not see beyond the decks of their craft, for, in addition to the gloom, the air was full of blinding spray. The brigantine, under the first shock, which struck her just abaft the mainmast, heeled over, and seemed for a moment as if she would never right again; but soon she began to move, and gathering headway rapidly, launched forth upon her mad career like an eagle driving before a thunderbolt.

It was a terrible sight, that small craft flying before the hurricane! Not a rag of canvass was visible on her long yards, yet she moved with a velocity of which words can give no conception. The force of the gale had flattened the ocean as level as a table, but clouds of flying spray half hid her hull from sight, though her tall masts

were seen continually rising above the misty vapor, the shrouds bellying far out before the wind. A landsman would have supposed that the next moment would be her last; yet still she drove on, seemingly unharmed, like a cutwater cleaving the surface of the sea.

For a considerable space of time, not a word was spoken on board the brigantine. When the squall first struck her, every one had seized a rope. Careening till her masts were almost parallel to the waters, there were many who feared that all was over; and it was long after immediate peril was past, before the crew could forget the awful sensations of that moment. The young commander stood on the quarter deck, now watching the spars, now glancing around the horizon. Near him was his young half-brother, who did not, for a single instant, take his eyes from his face. The captain was the first to speak.

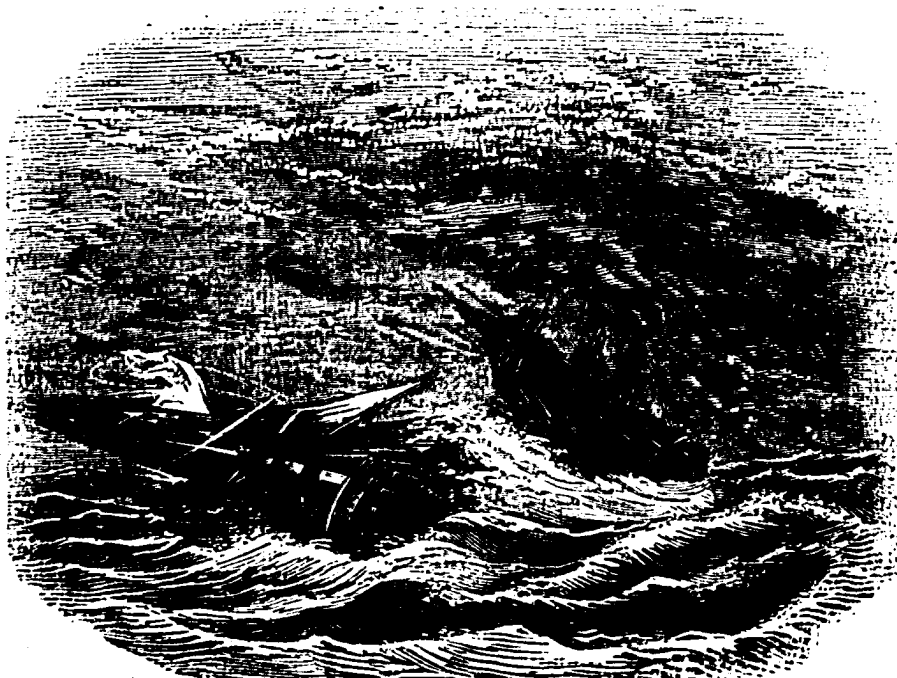
"We should have been all lost, but for the timely warning of the barometer," he said, addressing the midshipman, "But, ha! what is that?"

As he spoke, his eye rested on a distant object right in the track of the brigantine, which, on a nearer scrutiny, for they were approaching it with frightful rapidity, proved to be a ship on her beam ends. The spray was flying over her in showers, so as almost constantly to keep her partially obscured, and hence it was some time before those on the brigantine could make out whether any living beings were on the wreck. At last a group was discerned clinging to the rails of the quarter-deck, and among them there was something like the fluttering garments of a female.

"Can that be a woman, James?" said his brother to the young commander.

"I think it is—no! it was the spray deceived me—see! it is the gray hairs of an old man."

"Look again. I discern the old man, but just



behind him, and clinging to him—surely that is a female."

"You are right. Can we do nothing for them?"

"Do any thing for them?" ejaculated the young commander, "Alas! God only can help them now. It would be death to us, as well as to them, to attempt a rescue."

As he spoke thus in mournful tones, the brigantine rapidly approached the wreck. The sight of the American ship seemed to give hope to the unfortunate beings, who could be seen waving their hands, and, apparently, shouting for help, though their voices were unheard in the tempest. The female started up and clasped her hands, directing her eyes now on her gray-haired companion, and now on the brigantine, as if it was

for her parent more than for herself she cared. Touched by this spectacle, the young commander appeared for an instant to waver. Old Transom who stood holding on just beneath the quarter-deck, caught the expression of the captain's eye and shaking his head, said, with a freedom guaranteed by his years, experience, and intimacy with the commander—

"It's no use, Captain Hardy. Them folks will never see to-morrow's sun; the more's the pity for the old man and his darter—the Lord have mercy on their souls!"

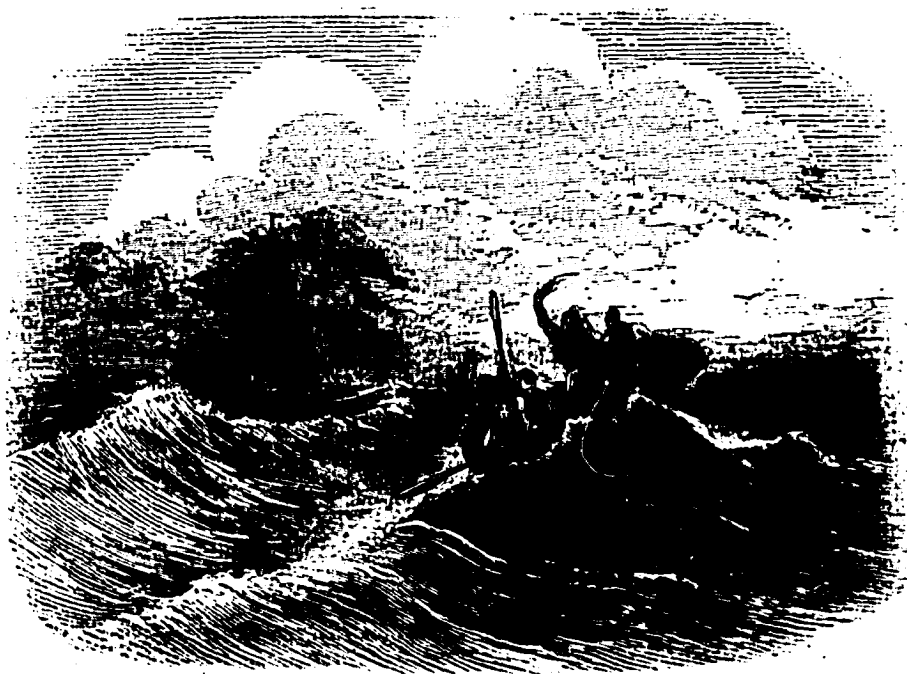
The brigantine was now close upon the wreck, which appeared to be that of a large ship, one of the clumsy West Indianmen of the age. A biscuit might have been thrown on her decks from the American, while the latter brushed by. Just

as the brigantine passed, almost within arm's reach, the female stretched out her hands with a last effort to solicit aid; and as she was near enough for Hardy to see that she was extremely lovely, he never after forgot the wild, imploring look of those beautiful eyes. She seemed some glorious sybil, as she stood there with her dark hair floating dishevelled over her shoulders. A moment more, and the brigantine had passed. In less than five minutes the wreck was no longer visible amid the thick spray that covered the surface of the ocean.

Hour after hour the brigantine drove before the hurricane, for though the extreme violence of the storm soon abated, it was long before the gale entirely lulled. Night fell, indeed, while the tempest still blew. At length, however, the wind decreased sufficiently to allow the vessel to resume

her course. But, prior to doing this, the young commander resolved to retrace his steps, in order to learn what was the fate of the unfortunate persons on the wreck. The head of the brigantine was accordingly laid in the proper direction. It was now perfectly clear, with the stars shining. As the wind went down, the waves increased, and there was comparatively small headway made, but the little craft gallantly struggled against the surges, bravely holding on her way, as if sensible that life or death might depend on her speed.

Morning was just breaking, when the young commander came on deck. The brigantine was now, as near as he could judge, approaching the vicinity where he had seen the wreck. He was accompanied by his halfbrother. It was with but a faint hope of success, that he ordered the latter aloft to scan the horizon.



"You have the keenest eye on board, James," he said; "Keep a sharp look-out, especially over the starboard quarter."

Meantime nought could be seen from the deck, though a score of eyes were anxiously sweeping the blue waters. The look-outs on the yards were also busy, but to no purpose. At last, after half an hour's intense anxiety, the midshipman hailed from the cross-trees, where his slight form was perched, like that of a bird swinging on the topmost twig of a tree.

"What see you?" eagerly demanded the commander.

"I see a speck over the starboard quarter—there, it is lost—now it emerges again into sight; it looks like the wing of a sea-gull. No! it is a boat—it contains human beings—they are five or six in number; and one, yes! one is certainly a female."

Such were the continuous exclamations of the youth, as the minutes revealed the true character of the object he saw. When he had concluded, the boat was visible from the deck.

"God be praised," cried the young commander. "Spring aloft, and shake out that foretopsail—let her have every thing she will carry!"

All on board partook more or less of this eagerness, and soon the brave brigantine was staggering along under a cloud of canvass. By the end of half an hour the boat was within a cable's length.

"Port your helm, quarter master," eagerly cried our young commander.

As he spoke, the brigantine shot down towards the boat, and rounded to, having the frail, cockle shell rocking under her bows. In a few seconds the rescued passengers were safe on her deck.

Having personally assisted the female on board

the brigantine, Hardy would have conducted her aft at once; but she would not leave the vessel's side until her parent was safe in her arms. Then she turned, and with a slight Spanish accent, thanked Hardy, in the purest English; for her father, on whom the task would more properly have devolved, seemed as yet incapable of speech.

Our hero, for such the reader by this time has discovered him to be, accompanied the beautiful girl to the door of his cabin, which he had hastily ordered to be prepared for her; and when the entrance closed on him, it seemed as if sudden darkness had fallen upon the ship.

CHAPTER II.

In the darkest night, or the bright daylight,
In earth, or sea, or sky,
In every home of human thought,
Will Love be lurking nigh.

N. P. Willis.

THE rescued persons consisted of the skipper of the West Indiaman, a portion of his crew, and two passengers, a father and his daughter. They had considered themselves lost after the disappearance of the brigantine; but, on the subsidence of the storm, one of the men had clambered along the sides of the vessel, and managed to disengage the boat which floated already nearly free. Soon after they left the wreck, choosing to trust to their new conveyance rather than to the water-logged vessel.

The passengers, the skipper said, in continuing his tale, were Cubans. The daughter had been educated in England, whence her father was just bringing her home to his princely residence on a sugar estate, not far from Havana, and in sight from the sea. Don Jose Segovia was a man of immense wealth. He had embarked from London for Jamaica, whence he was to cross over to his own island.

"Luckily I can set them ashore at once in Havana, whither I am bound," said our hero. "My business is to visit that port, and wait instructions for a future expedition. Something connected with the suppression of the piracies which, since the conclusion of the long wars, are now so frequent in the Gulf of Mexico."

"I hope it is after the Black Rover, that you are going," said the skipper.

"What of him? I never heard the name before."

"That is because you are a stranger to these seas. But I have heard a dozen or more stories of his atrocities. He has ravaged the Gulf for a twelvemonth or more, always sailing with a black flag, and a vessel painted black all over. None of the expeditions sent out to catch him, have as yet succeeded. His haunt is in one of the low islands, it is thought, contiguous to the coast of Cuba; and it is more than whispered that he sells

his captured goods, under the very nose of the Captain General, at Havana. Once, one of his Majesty's frigates nearly came up with the vessel. It was just at daybreak, while he was murdering the crew of a brig. As he was overmatched, he did not stay to plunder, but setting fire to his prize, hurried on board his schooner, and with every thing that would draw, went off to windward, like a duck. The frigate gave chase; but as the villain made two miles where his Majesty's vessel made one, the pursuit was of necessity abandoned."

"I should not wonder if he was the buccaneer I am after," said our hero. "However, I shall know all at Havana. Our consul is to give me my directions."

The conversation was now interrupted by the appearance of the fair Cuban and her parent, on deck. It was the first time she had left the privacy of the cabin since her rescue, and Hardy eagerly advanced to meet her. She came forward leaning on her father's arm. Never was there a greater contrast than between sire and child. Don Jose was a tall, thin, ceremonious personage, of few words, an elaborate toilette, and a cold and haughty air: he evidently considered himself superior to other men, and was, consequently, as near to being disagreeable as a well-bred Spaniard could be. His daughter was the reverse of all this. Her manners were frank and engaging, though withal dignified. No one could resist the silvery cadences of her voice, or the witchery of her dark, eloquent eye. In personal beauty, our hero thought he had never seen her rival. Her face was of the true Castilian cast, oval in shape, with a low, broad forehead, a boldly arched nose, full, red lips, and teeth of dazzling brilliancy. Her complexion was almost a nut-brown, but so transparent that every vein could be seen through it: clear and warm, it was that of a Houri. The set of her head upon the shoulders, was most majestic, and her bust was full, and rounded like that of a Juno. An arm that might have entranced a sculptor, a tiny hand and foot, a figure of voluptuous grace, and a carriage at once easy and dignified, completed the attractions of this splendid creature.

We will not dwell upon that, nor many ensuing conversations which occurred between the Donna Inez and our hero, while the brigantine was voyaging towards Havana. Each interview rivetted the chains of love more firmly around the heart of the young commander. The conversation of his fair guest, was at once sprightly and intelligent, so that her mind charmed even more than her face and person. Though Hardy had not ventured to clothe in words the affection which inspired him, yet his eyes had more than once inadvertently betrayed his secret; but the cold, reserved demeanor of Inez, on such occasions, warned him that he had presumed too far. What, indeed, had this beautiful and wealthy heiress, who might

command the hand of a grandee of Spain, in common with the comparatively penniless, and as yet unknown naval officer!

Yet there were moments when he almost fancied she loved him. He remembered old tales of chivalry, and "ladies fair," rescued from peril, who had loved and married their deliverers, even though "squires of low degree." But, at other times, her reserve convinced him anew, that he had no hope. Sometimes our hero affected a distant behavior towards his fair guest, rarely approaching her side, but pretending to be busy with the duties of the vessel. At other times, lured by one of her witching smiles, he would forget every resolution, and spend hours with her on the quarter deck. One of these latter occasions happened the very day they entered Havana. The brigantine was slowly approaching the harbor, now visible in the distance, beneath the silvery light of the tropical moon.

"You will come and see us at our estate, I hope," said Inez. "Come—you can not always be wanted on board the ship—and I feel sure you will not sail for some time."

Whether there was something peculiar in the tone of the speaker, or whether it was the mere fact of the invitation proceeding from Inez, and not from her father, but the heart of our hero bounded, and he could scarcely restrain himself within the limits of prudence.

"You feel sure that I will not sail soon," he said. "Can you read the future then?"

There was a scarcely perceptible tremor in his voice, which, perhaps, Inez did not notice, for she answered gaily,

"Do I not come of a race of sybils?—the old legends of our house, at least, will tell you so. And I prophesy, fair sir, incredulous as you seem, that you will not leave Havana these two weeks."

"I fear you have prophesied wrongly this time," said Hardy, laughing, and shaking his head, "for my orders lead me to expect that my detention will not outlast a day or two. But, suppose I give faith to this prediction," he added, his voice again slightly tremulous, "will you foretell for me another thing?"

"What is it?" said Inez, turning suddenly on him her full, dark eyes; and, oh! how the gaze of those glorious orbs thrilled to his inmost soul.

He would have asked her of his own fortune—whether he should be blessed with a fortunate love—whether she who stood beside him would ever become the partner of his destiny—but he dared not. He could not peril every thing by such a question. But he said,

"Do you believe in love?"

She began to smile archly, while those deep orbs were fixed mischievously on him. Had she penetrated his secret?

"That is not what you would have asked me," she said. "Come—confess it was not. You

wished me to prophesy, did you not, whether you yourself would ever love."

Our hero did not dare to meet the merciless railery of those eyes.

"Well, then, since you do not answer," she continued gaily, "I will take silence for consent, and proceed. Stay, let me look at your hand!"

She took his broad palm in her own tiny one, and proceeded with assumed gravity.

"Ah! here two lines cross—that means that you will be thwarted in love. Here they come to an end—that implies that the brightest visions fade. Here is another, shaped like an anchor.—I suppose that stands for hope. There, what do you think of my fortune telling?"

She let go the hand suddenly, and looking full into her listener's face, laughed merrily. What a witch she was! Could she be amusing herself at the perplexity depicted in his face.

"It is incomprehensible as you are yourself." At last he managed to say.

She looked at him, then snatched his hand again, and, as if a little annoyed recommenced.

"I will try once more, and endeavor to be clearer," she said. "Here are two ascending lines—they mean that you will come up into our mountains to see me, and that somebody else, I shall not say who, will arrive simultaneously. Here is a line down the fleshy part of the thumb—that foretells that you will leave us in a great hurry, for which I presume I shall be sorry—will not you? Then, here are a multitude of lines crossing and recrossing—they mean perplexities, and all sorts of things, which I am too tired to translate." And she coquettishly flung down the hand.

"Nay! try again," said our hero, encouraged beyond conception at her last words, "the third time, you know, is always decisive."

"The third time is fate," said she, seriously. "We may not tempt it. Jesting is well enough for the first and second, but never for the third—that is too terrible a reality." She turned away, and sighed.

All Hardy's late sudden exhilaration vanished. "She has seen my presumption," he said to himself. "I should not have betrayed myself by such fatal eagerness." There was silence for a few moments. Then Inez spoke.

"I believe," she said, with a smile, "that my serious words frightened you. Never mind. But I have told enough of your fortune for the present; the rest I will reveal when you come to see me. And pray now, Master Curiosity, let me retort on you the question—do you believe in love?"

"As firmly as that I live!" answered Hardy, with emphasis.

She was silent for nearly a minute, during which she looked down, and continued tapping on the deck with her tiny foot. Then she said,

"Well, I do not. It is a very pretty thing in romances, but makes people terribly insipid.

Never fall in love while you know me, or I shall grow tired of your acquaintance."

Was there a hidden meaning in those words, or were they only the passing remarks of a gay heart? Hardy feared the former. Before the conversation could be renewed, her father came up, and shortly after, the two retired to the cabin.

At dawn, the next morning, the brigantine was safe at anchor; and, as soon as the necessary preliminaries were over, the passengers landed. The old Don formally, but Hardy thought coldly, solicited the honor of a visit; but in vain our hero looked for a repetition from Inez of the invitation given the evening before.

"She has read my feelings," he said to himself, "and hence will not repeat it. Well, I can forget her."

And with this proud resolution, he bowed haughtily to his departing guests. Yet, strange to say, he watched the receding boat till it touched the wharf, and then followed its occupants with his eye until they were lost in the crowd on the landing.

CHAPTER III.

Fare thee well, and if forever,
Still forever fare thee well.

Byron.

The resolutions of lovers, it is said, are taken only to be broken; and our hero was no exception to the rule. The first day after the departure of Inez, he was firm in his determination to forget her; the second he began to waver; and the third, discovering that he would be delayed at least a fortnight before he could sail, he set forth for the country residence of Don Jose.

His route, after some hours of travel, led him up into the hills. At every step he was tempted to pause and gaze on the beauty of the prospect. All around were rich plantations, covering the descent into the valley, the white houses of the owners gleaming out brilliantly from the dark green foliage. Below was the ocean, stretching far away to the north until lost in the blue haze of the horizon. Tropical trees lifted their tall heads around; luxuriant parasite plants grew in profusion; and birds of gay plumage flitted across the path, or glanced, like sudden flashes of light amid the thick woods. As he proceeded, the air became more temperate, until at last, turning an angle of the road, the lordly mansion of Don Jose, stood before him.

The hour was approaching noon, a period of the day when people in that climate are generally within doors, and therefore our hero was not surprised to find no one visible about the place. He rode up to the lawn and there alighting, set out to seek an entrance to the house. The sound of falling water, like that of a fountain, led him to the back of the dwelling. The door of a sort of con-

servatory was open before him, and as the plashing seemed to proceed from within, he bent his steps in that direction. Voices attracted his attention as he drew near, and entering the place, he suddenly confronted Inez. She was not alone, however. A tall, powerfully built, and very handsome man, whose swarthy complexion and dark eyes betokened his Spanish blood, was conversing with her in an earnest manner. Both looked up as the shadow of our hero fell across the threshold, the cavalier with a slight frown, and Inez with a blush of embarrassment.

In a moment, however, every sign of this vanished from her face, and advancing eagerly she offered our hero her hand.

"Did I not say that I should see you," she said, smiling, "I knew you would not forget us, any more than we should cease to remember you. I am so glad you are come—father will be delighted, I know."

So warm a reception charmed our hero, and banished from his mind the impression of her embarrassment. He could not help looking towards her companion to see how he regarded this demeanor, for Hardy felt, instinctively, that the dark cavalier was a rival. Inez too, from some motive, turned in the same direction. The Spaniard, when he saw himself observed, assumed a courteous expression. Inez appeared to think her conduct required explanation, for she said, addressing him—

"You see, I have caught the English fashion, Senor Cordova, and give my hand to welcome my friends. But I forgot that I had not introduced you to Lieutenant Hardy, of the United States Navy; it is he who rescued my father and myself from the wreck."

As she finished speaking, she turned towards our hero, and their eyes met. In hers there was, for a moment, an expression that thrilled to Hardy's soul; it was not love, perhaps, and yet it was more than gratitude. His own lit up with sudden joy. Instantly her gaze fell to the ground, and the crimson blushes dyed her face and neck. But it was only for an instant. Immediately turning, she led the way into the mansion, saying—

"But let me conduct you, Mr. Hardy, to my father. Senor," and she bestowed one of her most bewitching smiles on the dark cavalier, "will you attend us?"

These first minutes of our hero's visit at the mansion, were a type of all that followed. Day after day passed, during which Inez divided her attentions almost equally between the two gentlemen. They were both as constantly with her as the customs of the country, liberalized considerably by her foreign education, allowed. Each felt that the other was a rival, but each was outwardly courteous to his opponent. Now Inez would seem to favor one, and now another. Yet even Hardy, irritable as all lovers are, could not accuse her of coquetry in this. She treated

neither as an admirer, but each as a friend. If there was any difference in her conduct towards them, it was that she behaved towards Hardy more as her own acquaintance, and to Cordova more as that of her father. Yet there was a certain degree of intimacy accorded to the Spaniard that Hardy in vain sought to obtain. His rival was frequently allowed *tele-a-teles* with Inez, which our hero could never get, for whenever he found himself alone with her, her parent, as if ever on the watch, was sure to appear.

There was something mysterious in this. Hardy could not complain of any want of courtesy on the part of his host, but he felt that he was less a favorite than Cordova with the old Castilian. His jealous heart soon divined the reason. His rival was a Spaniard, a rich *hidalgo* it was said, while he was a foreigner, and poor. The sentiments of Inez towards him were not so clear. She always appeared pleased with his society, but sometimes she was reserved; and then again she exhibited a cordiality in her manner which made Hardy's heart dance. The presence of Cordova always seemed to be a restraint on her. In short, our hero was bewildered. On the whole he despaired, and yet just sufficient hope was left alive in his breast to retain him at the mansion. But he grew daily more in love than ever.

He had been a guest of Don Jose about a week, when one morning early, he took a stroll in the grounds. Down in the valley long gangs of slaves were visible, going to their work; while, in the distance, the blue sea stretched far away. Suddenly, at a turn in the walk, he met Inez. During the night he had been reflecting on his position, and had come to the conclusion that it was folly for him to remain, so he thought this a good opportunity to announce his decision.

"I am going to-morrow!" he said. "Have you any commands for Havana?"

Inez turned suddenly upon him, her face perfectly bloodless.

"Going!" she exclaimed. "Then, as if ashamed of her emotion, she colored over brow and bosom, and looked upon the ground. Immediately after, she said. "You take me by surprise—what can you mean?—surely you are not offended?"

She finished with a glance of anxious inquiry.

"I must be back at my ship," replied Hardy, scarcely knowing what he said, for he was more than ever perplexed by her behavior.

"But you are not offended?" she persisted.

"Oh! no," he cried eagerly.

"Then, what is it?"

"I must return—duty—my letters—"

"Pshaw! Mr. Hardy, you know better," said Inez, in her peculiar manner, half wilful, half playful. "You told me the day you came, that you need not go back for a fortnight, and scarcely a week has yet passed. As for letters, I know you have received none. Duty! your duty, fair sir, is to stay here as long as you can, and make

yourself agreeable. I will have none of this playing truant. But, come now," and she laid her hand again frankly on his arm, and dropping her half-jesting tone, spoke in an earnest manner; "tell me, what whim is this?"

Hardy did not know what to say. He was on the point of confessing his love, and telling her that jealousy was the cause of his conduct; but he felt ashamed to acknowledge the latter, and he feared, moreover, the result of his confession. He resolved, therefore, to continue hiding his secret in his own bosom. Still it was necessary to speak, and scarcely aware what he said, he asked abruptly, that which had nearly betrayed his whole heart.

"Do you love this Spaniard, Inez?"

She looked embarrassed for an instant, but then burst into a merry laugh, as she answered,

"What a question! But I see how it is. You think I am too much with him, and you find it solitary. Jealous a little. Now, is not that it?"

She looked at him with her eyes sparkling with mischief. The first thought of our hero was, that Inez penetrated his jealousy and irritation, and laughed at it. He replied under these feelings.

"I have no right to expect you," he said coldly, "to bestow your time on me, and indeed, never claimed it."

The magnificent orbs of Inez flashed fire, and she drew herself up with dignity.

"You forget, sir," she said, "that if you choose to be rude, I, having no right to punish you in a different manner, must assert the liberty of my sex, and so I bid you good morning."

She turned away; but, before she had proceeded three steps, was overtaken by Hardy.

"Forgive me," he said. "I did not know what I said. I have been unpardonably rude."

Her eyes gushed full of tears, to hide which she averted her head; but she extended her hand, and Hardy felt that he was forgiven. Her emotion made him forget all his resolutions. Hurried away by his love, he pressed her hand, and said,

"Oh! Inez, must I go? May I not stay, and stay forever?"

The instant he spoke, he would have given worlds to recall his words; for Inez, suddenly withdrawing her hand, retreated a pace or two. She did not avert her face, however, though it was covered with blushes; but steadily regarded him. The color, however, soon left her cheeks, and she gazed at him more in sorrow than in anger.

"Now you must, indeed, go," she said, being the first to speak. "I was so happy in this visit. I thought you would be my friend—but that is past.—You must, indeed, go, Mr. Hardy," she continued, with more composure, "and go to-day."

As she concluded, she extended her hand as if for a farewell. Hardy was almost distracted at his indiscretion, but he could not part thus. Now that he had declared his passion, he was deter

mined to know all, for in the behavior of Inez, there was a mystery he could not fathom.

"Stay—one word, Inez—why should I go? Do you despise my suit—do you scorn the suitor?"

She hesitated a moment: then she said.

"No—heaven knows it is not that! As a friend," and she laid an emphasis on the word, "as a friend, I was glad to see you; but it was wrong, you ought not to have been here, nor ought I to have wished it."

"Then you love another?"

She was silent, her eyes averted; but her heaving bosom showed her agitation.

"You love this Spaniard, this Cordova," said Hardy, speaking with difficulty, as if he hated to breathe the name.

Still she was silent, and now terribly agitated.

"I will not curse him," said Hardy. "But no one can tell what is in my heart. I will go away before I meet him, lest I do that of which I should repent."

"Stay one moment," cried Inez, grasping his arm eagerly. "I do not love him."

"Bless you for those words," exclaimed Hardy, seizing her hand and kissing it.

But Inez drew it away, and retreating from him, continued,

"Nevertheless, I am going to marry him. There, now, curse me, if you will."

Our hero stood like one thunderstruck. Several moments passed in silence. At last he said,

"There is some terrible mystery here. You

are not one, Inez, to sacrifice yourself according to the custom of your country, to one you do not love. You have been educated in a land where domestic happiness is a reality, and you know such can only be attained by a union of hearts. What does it mean? You do not love me, but accept me as a brother, and let me extricate you from this horrible doom."

The countenance of Inez had been agitated while Hardy spoke; but, when he finished, she shook her head sadly, and replied,

"There is no mystery—at least you can do nothing for me." Then she essayed a faint smile as she said, "do you not remember I predicted you should meet another gentleman here? But have you forgotten that I promised to finish telling your fortune if you visited me? Well—I prophecy for you a brilliant fortune, and, and," here her voice faltered, "a happy union with some fair girl of your own beautiful land. God bless you! We shall not meet again on earth; but, perhaps, in heaven, where there is no more sorrow, I may recognise you as a brother."

Steps were heard approaching, as she extended her hand, while her eyes swam in tears. Our hero stooped down, and kissed her fair palm; then murmuring a blessing on this beautiful, but evidently sorrowing creature, he rushed down a neighboring walk.

In fifteen minutes, he was on his way to Havana, having left his compliments for Don Segovia, who had not yet risen.

(To be continued.)

THE COBBLER OF NANTASKET.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

"Here's the smell of the blood yet—oh! oh! oh!"—MACBETH.

ONCE upon a time, as old-fashioned story-tellers say, there dwelt, in the good town of Nantasket, a little, notable cobbler, who filled the neighborhood daily with the clack of his hammer. From sunrise to sunset a more vigorous awl was not plied in town. But no sooner had day departed than the bench was moved away, the lapstone laid up, and the cobbler bled away to the village inn, where in one corner of the ample chimney, with his mug of beer before him, he was accustomed to harangue his clique of admirers about the embargo, the tariff, the last news from England, our relations in China, and the various other matters which, in bye-gone times, puzzled so many wise and hoary heads. On all these subjects our cobbler, after early twilight, was a perfect oracle, having read the history of England by Oliver Goldsmith, and being actually a subscriber for a newspaper. Not a negotiation miscarried, but he showed how it might have been concluded; at every battle lost abroad he proved in what way the defeated general had erred; and Napoleon, if the cobbler was to be believed, might have been reigning to this day, if he had but followed our hero's advice. At such times how eloquent he grew! The very air with which he took the pipe from his mouth, and thumped upon the table with his brawny hand, infallibly made his audience gape with wonder, and his adversary scratch his head in his puzzle to reply. Few could compete with the little old cobbler; and so it came to pass that at last he grew to be quite a dictator, laying down the law much like Addison at Wills', or glorious old John in his balcony. No matter who might advance an opinion, no one saw its correctness until leisurely taking his pipe from his mouth, and whiffing away till the smoke curled fantastically upward to the ceiling, he

"Shook his ambrosial curls, and gave the nod."

The little cobbler moreover, had at times been an officer of a town meeting, and once indeed was chosen an inspector of the election. Upon the memory of these honors he lived. He had also a great turn for courts, was known to hold the judges in high reverence, deemed it quite a

distinction to be summoned as a witness, and having once sued a man for a debt, was constantly detailing what his lawyer said, and how energetically the court charged the jury in his favor. You were sure to get into his good graces at once by reminding him thereof. Could he have been a juryman he would have been delighted. But that honor was confined to freeholders, in the generation where his lot was cast; and all he owned was his bench, his lapstone, and a side of leather. So he had to pocket his hard fate as he best could.

It so happened that about this time there came to the village a fat, red-faced tailor, who having been the tavern orator of the town he came from, set about attempting, as soon as he was settled at Nantasket, the dethronement of the cobbler. But this was no easy task. The old fellow was as sly as a fox, and, not knowing the metal of the new-comer, never even entered into an argument with him. He only cocked up his little snub nose whenever the tailor was mentioned. But the latter did not despair. He took a shop right opposite the stall of the cobbler, put in it a new-fashioned kind of casement called a bow window, and filled it from top to bottom with glossy coats and colored pictures of the fashions. The women were delighted, and having always hated Amasa because he was a bachelor, soon teased their spouses into high notions of the tailor's eloquence. All the disaffected and envious likewise swelled his ranks, so that at last the empire became divided: and while the cobbler harangued in the chimney corner, the waggish tailor declaimed at the porch beside the door.

One morning, just as the cobbler was sitting down to work, he noticed an unusual bustle in the street. Early as it was, a goodly portion of the townsfolk were already up, and little groups of men stood talking before the closed houses, or were hurrying down to the village landing. A short distance off, the tailor, mounted on a post, was gesticulating violently to a crowd of hearers. Amasa, at this sight, checked his curiosity, lit his pipe, took up his last, and began to pelt away. But just then a hurrah met his ear. It was a part of the crowd cheering the tailor. He

could appear indifferent no longer. He threw down his hammer, smashed his pipe to atoms, kicked his bench over, and flinging his apron after it set off to the landing in an agony of wrath, envy, and ambition.

"Make way—here comes the man we want," shouted a detachment of his partisans, as they saw him approaching. The old fellow, gratified by such homage, mended his pace, the crowd opened before him, and there stood the two rivals, eyeing each other like game-cooks: the one panting with his race, and the other with the excitement of speaking.

The truth was, the tailor was the cause of it all. He and a crony of his having been fishing down the bay, had brought back intelligence of a dead body washed up by the tide. The news spread like wild fire, waking all Nantasket an hour before its time.

The cobbler had arrived in the very nick of time. The tailor was declaiming against a proposition, first started by one of the cobbler's chums, that a coroner's jury should be empanelled to examine the corpse and collect evidence of the murder. For that a homicide had been perpetrated no one appeared to doubt.

The cobbler saw that the time had come when he must assert his supremacy, and so instead of avoiding battle, he courted it like a valiant man-at-arms. He perceived at once which way the popular feeling ran. Besides, if he took sides with the townsfolk, and routed the tailor from the field, his ambition would be gratified in getting a place upon the jury, for the coroner always made his selection indifferently from those at hand. Who knew, besides, but he might even be the foreman? And if it really was a murder, and the murderer should be caught and tried, what an important person would the foreman of this coroner's jury be!

"A dead body's a thing, fellow-citizens," he began, "that ought to be inquired into. There's been foul, bloody, unnatural, cannibal murder committed, and it should be sifted to the bottom. It's matter for a crowner's jury. Who knows but the murderer may even now stalk abroad—in our midst perhaps—and that a jury might discover marks by which he should be detected?—though for that matter," he continued, looking hard at the tailor, "they needn't go far for 'em; for I've always said some people were no better than they should be."

"Hurrah for neighbor Amasa," roared a ragged hanger on.

"Huzzá!" sang another, "how he pitches it into Snip. I calkerlate that's laying it on thick any how."

One would have thought, that, if the tailor had been as wary a bird as the cobbler, he would, after these demonstrations, have remained quiet; but he continued hinting at its expense, and the probability that the tide would wash away the body before the jury could get to the beach. The cobbler, at this, bristled up, and in a pretty loud tone remarked,

"What's expense to public justice? I don't see why some people oppose investigation—for my part, I'll not sleep till it's sifted, sifted, sir, to the very bottom—where's the crowner?"

The uproar now grew tremendous; the cobbler and the jury were the orles; and the partisans of the tailor were forced to hide their diminished heads.

At last the coroner came, and that high functionary, after elbowing his way through the crowd, was greatly startled at the news, particularly when he found how unanimous was the public will that he should sift the matter. Not wishing to be outdone by the cobbler's alacrity, he vowed he would never shave till the body had been found and due measures taken to arrest the murderer.

The cobbler's triumph was now complete; but it did not stop here. He was resolved to be foreman of the jury, and after a little manœuvring his ambition was gratified. Amid the cheers of the excited townsfolk the party set forth. The tailor, however, who should have been their guide, was missing, and so it happened that they started with no information except that the body was "near the point." Now, unluckily, there were two points. But the cobbler vowed they would soon find it nevertheless. Only, as they started, he hinted to several of his partisans, to keep a watch over the tailor, "for," added he, prophetically, "he knows more of this affair, depend on't, than he chooses to tell."

The bay coast was a low, sandy beach, fronting out toward the ocean, and almost destitute of verdure. Just above high-water-mark a range of sand hills skirted the shore, undulating the horizon and giving a bleak and barren aspect to the scene. On the opposite side of the bay rose up a line of hills and headlands, behind which towered the blue tops of the distant mountains. The whole coast was the scene of many a wild legend; and tradition reported that buccaneers had buried treasures there. Haunted spots were pointed out where shadowy forms had actually been seen. Of these spectral spots, Point Neversink was the most fearful, and few men ventured to approach it after dusk.

It was long past noon when the cobbler and his jury reached the beach, and as they mounted

one of the low sand hills the long line of coast opened before them. The sun was still intensely hot. The wind had died away leaving it a dead calm; not a shrub or tree was near to shelter them; and the atmosphere undulated hazily in the sultry sunshine. The tide was down, but on the flood. The breakers rolled in, the foam combing along their crests, and then their dark wall tumbling headlong into foam. A few fowl ran along before the creamy sea water that came sliding up the sand, or nimbly followed the receding undertow. Not a cloud was seen on high. A mile in the offing a solitary sloop, with its single tall mast and enormous mainsail, swung lazily upon the glittering deep; while away in the distance, like white-winged gulls, a few sails flashed in the sunshine. There was no sound but the roar of the surf and the wash of the undertow. Few spots are more desolate than a barren sea coast in the heat of a summer's day.

"It arn't Point Neversink, I guess," said the cobbler to his jury, not caring to visit that spot if he could avoid it, and contenting himself with a long survey through a very old, short-sighted spy-glass, "and so, gentlemen, we'll sarch Point Woonsocket," and the eager inquirers, big with their mission, followed the cobbler a mile or two up the coast.

But their search was unsuccessful. They walked all over Point Woonsocket, went around every sand hill, and peered into every hole left by the tide. But all was in vain. At last they gave it up, called a council, and resolved reluctantly to visit Neversink, hoping to reach it before dark. But when evening came on, they were still a mile or so from the point. At last the sun went down behind the distant hills, bringing their blue outline out in bold relief, and dyeing the distant sky with purple and gold. The breeze began to freshen, its low wailing coming to the ear with an unearthly sound. The people of a coast are always superstitious, and the worthy jury were not a whit behind their neighbors. Every man of it had seen some strange sight, or knew those who had; and as for the cobbler he was the very prince of ghost-seers and story-tellers. So it happened, as twilight deepened, and they drew nearer to the haunted Point, that their pace slackened, they walked all in a heap, their voices sank into whispers, stories that made the hair stand on end circulated, and imperceptibly they worked themselves up into that half frightened state in which children pass a church-yard at night. It would have done any skeptic in apparitions good, to see the cobbler meantime. Though quaking in his shoes, he forced himself to go a few paces in

advance. His form half lost in the dim twilight, he was seen, beckoning on his lagging followers, cheering their spirits and his own by whistling lustily, and all the time looking anxiously around or starting at the sound of the wind moaning across the sand hills.

"Hark!" suddenly whispered one of the group, "did you hear anything ahead?"

"No—you didn't—did you?" replied the cobbler, coming to a dead halt, and scarcely speaking for fright.

They listened eagerly, each one looking the others by turns in the face. Sure enough a low, indescribable sound was heard on the other side of the sand hills, as if coming from something on the beach.

"It's a groan, isn't it?" gasped one with a blanched face.

"There's Pint Neversink just ahead," faltered another, and sinking his voice to the lowest whisper, he added, "it's nigh here they say Kidd buried his treasure and murdered his prisoners."

"There it is again, deacon—what shall we do?" said another, clinging to the church dignitary, as if safety was to be had there.

"We'd better go back, hadn't we?" asked the deacon, in reply.

The cobbler had his own feelings, and was half disposed to take the advice. But when he thought how much it would redound to his courage if he kept on, and how the tailor would triumph if he returned, he resolved to persevere. So having repeated all the verses of Scripture that he knew, he boldly proceeded ahead to reconnoitre. But as he was a sensible man, and saw no call for unnecessary noise, he took off his hat, and began to creep silently and stealthily toward the sand hill, stopping and putting his ear to the ground to listen, and then crawling a step or two further on. At last the outline of his head and neck was just visible in the darkness, boldly defined against the sky as he lifted it cautiously above the profile of the hill. In a minute or two he drew it softly back, like a turtle retreating into his shell, and motioned for his followers to come on. But they did not move an inch. The boldest of them at last ventured to petition the cobbler to return.

"What's the matter with you?" said the emboldened foreman, but still speaking in a whisper, "it's only the tide washing agin the body, and not a groan."

"The body!—is it there?" eagerly asked the deacon.

"I saw it just below high-water-mark," answered the cobbler, "large and kind of dark like."

"Oh! I knew this was the Pint," ejaculated the deacon, recovering spirit, "and I thought the noise was nothing after all, only you all seemed to think differently."

Nothing was now heard of but going on; the fright of the valorous jurymen was dissipated; and each man seemed big with the consequence the discovery would give him with his townsman. But there was still enough of their late feelings left in them to make them converse in whispers.

"There, gentlemen, it is, and yonder are the tracks of the men who visited it this morning," solemnly said the cobbler, as they reached the brow of the hill; and he pointed about twenty yards off to a dark, shadowy object on the beach.

"And that's a real murdered man—oh! the wickedness of the human heart!" ejaculated the deacon.

"Follow me!" boldly said the cobbler, descending the hill.

"It's half covered by sand, ain't it?" whispered one.

"It's not very long," said another, "don't it seem to you to grow smaller?"

"Hush, didn't its arm move then?" gasped a third, coming to a dead halt.

"Pooh!" answered the cobbler, with forced

boldness, but also stopping, "it's only the tide tossing the limb."

They were now within a few yards of the long sought for corpse, but hitherto it had been too dark for them to see it distinctly. Just, however, as the cobbler spoke, the moon broke suddenly forth, sheeting the white coast in silver, and disclosing to their eager gaze, in the dead body before them, the dark form and gaunt proportions of—A HUGE NEWFOUNDLAND DOG.

The laugh was so loud against the poor little cobbler, and the waggish tailor boasted so much of the success of his joke, that one morning the stall of Amasa was found unopened, and when the neighbors broke into it they discovered that he had, with all his tools and chattels, left the town in the night. He was never afterward heard of in Nantasket, and the waggish tailor, by general assent, succeeded to his chimney corner. A few there were of his former cronies, who would now and then sigh for the good old times when the cobbler ruled the roast: but the great mass of his fellow townsmen—alas! for earthly fame—soon forget both him and his eloquence. New men and new measures reigned in Nantasket; and no one now remembers the cobbler, save only his veracious chronicler.

THE BLACK ROVER.

A STORY OF THE WEST INDIES.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

(Continued from page 44.)

CHAPTER IV.

'This, by his tongue, should be a Montague!
Fetch me my rapier, boy.

Romco and Juliet.

HARDY arrived at Havana in a condition of the most hopeless despondency. During the ride his mind had been occupied wholly in endeavoring to unravel the mystery that enveloped Inez. He could come to no conclusion, except that she was bound, by some old promise or other, to marry Cordova, though she did not love him. But our hero was equally convinced, that she did not love himself. Her agitation he attributed to the pain she felt in checking the hopes of one to whom she owed her life.

He would have sought in activity some resource from sorrow; but the consul had not yet learned in what direction to find the pirate, whom Hardy was sent to seek. For some weeks prior to the arrival of the brigantine, this dreaded rover had suddenly disappeared from the Gulf, and though it was believed he had only changed the scene of his operations, and not abandoned his profession, there had been, as yet, no information received of his whereabouts. Hence Hardy was forced to continue inactive. To find relief from regret, he mingled in the amusements of the place.

He had been at Havana about a week, when, one evening, he lounged into a public gambling house, then in Cuba, as now in Mexico, a species of fashionable exchange. As he entered, his ears were greeted by an unusual hubbub. Every body seemed crowding around one of the tables. Curiosity impelled him to push forward, when the first person that met his sight, was his half brother, conspicuous in the centre of the group. The youth appeared considerably excited, but not less so than many around him. What astonished Hardy most, was that all seemed to be addressing James, some telling him to try again, others advising him not to tempt luck too far.

Pushing his way through the crowd, our hero

soon found himself at the faro table. He laid his hand on the shoulder of his half brother, and said, somewhat sharply,

"What does all this mean, James?"

The lad appeared abashed, on recognizing our hero, and coloring, hung down his head. Hardy did not have to wait long for an explanation, however, for a dozen of the bystanders immediately began the story.

It appeared that the lad had entered the hall that night, with one of his fellow midshipmen, and had, for the first time, been induced to play. He happened to have several hundred dollars with him, belonging to the ship, all of which was soon staked and lost in the excitement of playing. When he found himself a beggar, remorse awoke. Almost frantic, he turned away, and was about to leave the place, but recollecting that he had a real remaining in his own purse, he drew it forth, and staking it, desired the banker, with bitter irony, to allow it to remain until he returned. He then suffered himself to be dragged, rather than led by his companions, into the next room, where the midshipman, thinking to rally his spirits, ordered some wine, and insisted on his drinking it. The two were still discussing the liquor, James almost stupified with remorse, when several gentlemen rushed from the gambling hall, inquiring for him; and, on finding him still present, fairly carried him back. The real, which he had staked, never expecting to see it again, had won every time, by one of those extraordinary chances which sometimes happen, and, doubling itself at every throw, was now augmented to a heap of gold. The cards had been dealt the fourteenth time, just as our hero approached.

"Come away, James," said Hardy, authoritatively, when he had heard this explanation. "You never should have been here."

"It is his brother," remarked a spectator.

The banker gave a sneer, but said nothing. However, some companion remarked.

"Brother or not, this is a pretty time to stop. Show the bank a chance."

"I say you must come away," quietly remarked Hardy, laying his hand on his half brother.

"There is two thousand and twenty-four dollars down," said the banker, shuffling the cards, and looking at the lad. "Will you bet again, sir! The table must go on."

Our hero made no answer, but swept the gold aside, and nodding to his brother's companion to take care of it, led the lad away.

"I say that was cool," said a voice in the crowd.

"It is next door to robbery," said the confederate, "the luck would have turned the next time; gentlemen ought not to play unless they play fair, and keep at it."

"It's a piece of swindling, in my opinion, arranged beforehand," said a new voice. "I don't believe the lad is the fellow's brother at all."

Hardy by this time, reached the door, but something in the tone of the last speaker, struck him as familiar, and giving his brother into charge of the midshipman, he turned back into the room. The remarks he had heard had chafed him a good deal, but this last one sent the angry blood in torrents to his brow.

"Who said I and this boy were confederates?" he asked sternly, walking straight up to the table, and looking around. Almost the first person his eye fell upon, was his successful rival, Cordova, who, with a sneer on his lips, was regarding our hero from the other side of the table. Hardy thought he had recognized the voice.

"I said it," replied the Spaniard; "and I say it again, swindler."

This opprobrious epithet, thus hurled in his teeth, almost made our hero beside himself with rage: he sprang over the table at one leap; and the next instant Cordova lay on the floor, felled by a single blow of Hardy's arm.

The Spaniard rose to his feet, livid with rage. His eyes flashed like those of a tiger, and drawing a dagger from his bosom, he rushed at our hero. But the crowd had interposed by this time, and the two combatants were forcibly separated. The tumult was already attracting the attention of the guard, and as both parties were in danger of arrest if they remained, Hardy and his antagonist were immediately hurried away by officious well wishers.

"You will hear from him before an hour," said a French naval officer, with whom our hero had an acquaintance, and who, happening to be present at the fracas, had attended Hardy home. "By the bye, do you know he is the best swordsman in Havana, as well as the best shot?"

"I am not the advocate of duels," said Hardy calmly, "but in this case I shall not hesitate to fight. The insult was wholly gratuitous. Besides, by insulting me thus in a foreign port, he insulted my flag. Whether he is a good or bad shot does not influence me a whit."

"Pray, do not misunderstand me—I did not suppose it would. I made the remark only with a view to learn your own proficiency with sword or pistol, or both. As the challenged party, you have the choice of weapons."

"I shall choose pistols," said our hero, "I may depend on you, I suppose, to settle preliminaries?"

"Certainly, *mon ami*."

"By the bye," said Hardy, "do you know much of this Cordova?"

"The very question I was going to ask you," replied the French officer. "I thought him an old enemy of yours, for, do you know, there was an asperity in his tone that was full of meaning. He evidently knew something of you, and intended to insult you. It looks to me as if the scene at the faro table was only used as an excuse to get up a duel with you."

"I have met him before," said Hardy, "and we were not exactly on the best terms; but neither ever was rude or insolent. It was under circumstances, however, where I could learn nothing of him. What do you know?"

"Very little. I believe he is very rich, and talks of settling here. I often see him at the faro table, where he plays high. One or two persons there seem to know more of him than they choose to tell. He is, perhaps, some fugitive from the Spanish Colonies, who has plundered the patriots and fled—a man of that stamp, you know, would not care to be recognized."

Here the conversation ceased, for a servant informed our hero that a cavalier was below, who desired to see him. The stranger proved to be an officer of the garrison, with a message from Cordova. Hardy referred the visitor to his friend, and withdrew, leaving them to settle the arrangements for a meeting. These were soon determined. It was agreed that the parties should meet at day-break, at a designated spot just without the city. The French officer promised to call for our hero in time, and then took his leave.

It was not until he was alone that Hardy began coolly to reflect on his position. His early education had taught him that it was wrong to take the life of a fellow-creature in private combat; but this opinion had been considerably weakened by the sentiments prevalent in the navy: so that, on the whole, he could not regret the step he was about to take. It would never do, he said to himself, for an American officer, after giving a public blow, to decline affording satisfaction for it. Perhaps some personal feeling mingled in this decision, though he was not aware of it: his antagonist was his successful rival, and our hero hated him none the less on that account.

He wrote a letter to his half brother, and placed it where it would be found, in case of his death; after which he examined his pistols, and then laid himself down to sleep. But, for some time he could find no repose. He had taken life in battle more than once, but never in a duel; and the

approaching meeting, therefore, filled him with solemn thoughts. Finally he fell asleep, and slumbered so soundly, that he did not awake until the French officer laid his hand upon his shoulder.

"You sleep soundly," said his second, "and I am glad to see it. Your nerves will be all the better for it. I have a slight breakfast laid for us: after partaking which, we must be off, for it is getting late."

In half an hour they were on the road, and in half an hour more had gained the appointed ground. Day was just breaking. The other party had not yet come, and so they sat down to wait. But minute passed after minute, without the arrival of Cordova; and after an hour had elapsed, the French officer insisted on returning to the city.

"You shall post him as a coward," he said. "This is a pretty poltroon for you."

The surprise of the officer was not less than Hardy's, when, on regaining the city, they found Cordova's second, who informed them that, on going for his principal at the appointed hour, he discovered that he had left the city.

"No one can give any clue to his whereabouts," he said. "He has shown the white feather. Had I known what a craven he was, gentlemen, I should have had nothing to do with him."

Before noon the city rang with the flight of Cordova. Those who only knew him casually, attributed it to cowardice, but others who understood him better, were convinced that some imperative reason existed for his sudden disappearance. Our hero was among the latter. He could not shake off the feeling that the departure of Cordova was, in some way, connected with Inez, and he feared, forboded harm to her.

CHAPTER V.

Was ever woman in this humor wooed?
Was ever woman in this humor won?
I'll have her.

Richard III.

We must now go back a few days, and resume our narrative at the mansion of Don Jose. Taking up the thread of events then on the morning of Hardy's departure, we shall account for the appearance of Cordova in Havana.

The approaching footsteps, whose sound had produced the final separation of Inez and our hero, proved to be those of Cordova, who, emerging into sight at the end of an avenue soon after Hardy disappeared, joined Inez. Before he reached the latter, she had a moment to compose her agitated countenance. He noticed, however, the traces of tears in her eyes, which confirmed him in the impression that he had heard another voice beside hers. But of this he said nothing.

"You are alone, fair Inez," he remarked, gallantly raising his hat. "I did not know you were so early a riser. Do you always come forth thus to watch the waking of day?"

Inez was more than half inclined to believe that Cordova knew who had just left her, but she felt his affectation of ignorance to be a relief, and thanked him from her heart for it. She answered, therefore, smilingly,

"I would I could persuade myself oftener to rise early, Senor—I used to do it in England frequently—but here the sloth of the tropics infects me, though morning is the sweetest part of the day."

"I am always up with the lark, as they used to tell me in England."

"You have been in England then, Senor?"

"Many years ago," he replied, "fair Inez," and his eyes sought her face with unequivocal admiration.

"And do you like the country?" asked Inez, who seemed somewhat uneasy, and began to move towards the house.

"Passing well only," he answered, taking his place familiarly yet courteously at her side. "There are other countries I like better, and other faces than those of English beauties." He spoke these words in a low, meaning whisper.

Inez was now hurrying her pace. She knew what was coming, yet she dreaded to hear it. True, she had pledged herself to this man, or allowed her father to do it for her; but this was before she knew her own heart. Her late conversation with our hero had revealed to her that she loved another than Cordova, and though she gave that other no hope, and left him with the impression that she would wed his rival, yet nothing now seemed to her so terrible as such a union.

Cordova quickened his steps with hers, and walked on beside her some moments in silence. He bit his lip too with vexation, and the blood went and came perceptibly over his swarthy countenance. At last he seemed to have come to his resolution, for he laid his hand on the arm of Inez, and said,

"Stop a minute, beautiful Inez, for I have much to say to you, and, perhaps, there will never be another opportunity like the present."

Her face was perfectly colorless, and she trembled violently, but she allowed him to lead her to a garden-seat, where, with palpitating heart, she awaited what he had to say. Full well she knew what its tenor would be, but she knew also that she could not avoid listening to it, if not now, at least soon, and so she determined to hear it at once. Cordova stood respectfully before her, his natural haughtiness subdued, and in spite of his air of sternness, he was a really handsome and noble-looking lover.

"Your father, sweet Inez," he said, "has, as you well know, promised me your hand—promised it to me long before you returned from England—

and his promise only wants your sanction, to render me the happiest of men. I say it only waits your sanction, for though Don Jose has informed me that you have already given it, I will not take it as conferred until received from your own fair lips."

The tone and manner, as well as the words of this address, were those of the most earnest and deferential lover; and Inez, misled by their air of chivalrous entreaty, suddenly resolved to make an appeal to Cordova.

"Oh!" she cried, clasping her hands, and looking up eagerly into his face, "what a relief your language is to me. Forget, Senor, all that has passed—forget that my father ever promised for me, or that I sanctioned that promise—let us be

friends—but do not ask me to be yours, for indeed, indeed I cannot love you."

The countenance of her listener grew darker and darker, as she proceeded, and when she had finished, he was for a moment silent, though the working of his face showed he was inwardly agitated.

"By Saint Jago," he said at length, "this is trifling. You refuse me—take care, proud girl, take care," and he lifted his finger menacingly.

Inez started to her feet, her lips apart, her eyes distended with terror. There was something in the look of Cordova she had never seen before, something fearful in those black, flashing eyes, and it explained the vague dread which had come over her, at times, in his presence. He saw he



had frightened her, and his manner changed instantaneously. It was wonderful, the power he had over himself.

"Nay, sweet Inez," he said, soothingly and deprecatingly, "be not alarmed. Forgive my sudden burst of passion. We soldiers have rough tempers at the best, never having had the hand of love to smooth them. Excuse my sharp words. Consider, too, that, if I spoke warmly, it was because of the threatened loss of your love." And, as he addressed her, he led her again to her seat.

Inez sunk down, passive before the strong arm of Cordova. She sat with clasped hands, and a throbbing heart, while he proceeded.

"Let me hope that you will reconsider this matter, dear Inez," he said. "It is now nearly

two years since I have been encouraged to consider you mine. You were pledged to me by your parent, as is the most common custom of the country, before we saw each other. I loved you then from your picture, but when I came to know you, as I have within this fortnight, the charms of your mind increased my passion beyond all bounds. I do not ask you to return this love at once. You have been brought up in England, where the customs are different from here, and I cannot expect you," he said, with some chagrin, "to be like Spanish maidens exactly; but in time you will love me. Only be mine, and I know you will love me."

Inez shook her head, but did not venture to look up. She was in a dilemma, and one, too, she

felt, partially of her own making. She had yielded to her father's entreaties, when in England, to wed Cordova, and had thought she did nothing strange, for such was the practice of her country. She had, even after her return, tacitly confirmed this promise by her conduct towards Cordova. It was only after the arrival of Hardy, on discovering how much she preferred his society, that she began to understand her heart, and to shrink from fulfilling her contract. She blamed herself severely for having done as she did. She was silent from embarrassment.

"And why will you not love?" said Cordova, after having regarded her in moody silence for a while.

She made no answer. She could not, indeed, have spoken for the world. Her throat convulsively choked; too well she knew why she could not love him.

"Do you love another?" said Cordova, slowly, every word seeming to be extorted from him. "Do you love this young American? By all the saints, if it is as I suspect," he exclaimed, savagely, again losing all control over himself, "I will drive my dagger to his heart."

"Oh! do not," cried Inez, leaping to her feet, and grasping his arm, for he had drawn a dagger, and was turning fiercely away.

The dagger fell to the ground from his relaxed grasp, he started back, half in suspense, half in rage. Cordova had not really believed that his rival had made such progress in her affections. As for Inez, she sunk to her seat again, covering her face with her hands, to hide the blush of maiden shame; for she felt that she had betrayed herself by her conduct.

Cordova took one or two turns along the walk, like a chained tiger: then he stopped suddenly before Inez, and almost fiercely grasping her arm, lifted her to her feet.

"Listen, scnorita," he said, hissing the words between his teeth. "Mine you shall be, and that before a month. I would have played the courteous lover, but you scorned me in that guise. Well, the despotic one is, perhaps, my most natural character," and he laughed fiercely. "I am no carpet knight, smiling and smirking for a lady's honor, but have been used to be loved when I commanded it. As fair ones as you, too, have loved me, and been glad to do it; oh! you do not know me—I am a terrible ravager of lady's hearts."

Frightened, bewildered, and in pain from his strong grasp of her arm, Inez could not speak, but stood gazing at him spell-bound. He returned her look for a while, and then flung her off with a scornful laugh.

"You are thinking, I suppose," he said, "of Beauty and the Beast. Well, I am hideous, am I not—in character, I mean, though scarcely in looks, I hope."

Still Inez could not reply, though he paused

and seemed to await an answer. At last he resumed a milder tone; his passion was gradually working itself off.

"A Spaniard, you should know, Inez," he said, "never abandons a promised bride. I will not hurt your popinjay of a lover: that much I will grant to your childish fancy; but remember, he must never cross my path, or, by Saint Jago, he dies. Come, forget him. Your father will never consent to your marrying him, or, indeed, any one than me. It is your destiny to be mine. Say, then, sweet one, that you will ratify your father's promise."

He approached Inez as he spoke, and would have seated himself familiarly beside her. But she sprang from her seat, her eyes flashing, and her bosom heaving with indignation. Embarrassment, fear, everything but disdain had passed away; all her native courage was restored her; and she stood like some imperious Juno.

"Never—never will I ratify my father's promise," she exclaimed vehemently. "Who, and what are you, that you dare thus to speak? My father, I know, will not insist on this union—nay! when he hears of this interview, he will order you from his house."

Cordova stood, regarding her with admiration as she spoke. Indeed, never had she looked more beautiful. Her fine form was drawn up to its utmost height; her cheek blazed with excitement; her eyes fairly flashed lightning. There was something in such magnificent and awful beauty that fascinated her hearer. But, when she ceased, his gaze and admiration slowly changed to a sneer, and he said—

"Stay, my pretty one—not so fast. Your father will insist on the union, and for one very good reason—his life depends on it."

"It is a foul falsehood," energetically exclaimed Inez; and she looked as if she could have transfixed her hearer.

"Ask him if it is," replied Cordova. "Ask him if he does not recollect a certain conspiracy, in which he engaged about two years ago, instigated thereto by the example of the Mexicans. He will tell you that I have papers in my possession which make his head not worth a real; and those papers, fair Inez, I will produce, unless you ratify his promise."

Could this be so, said Inez to herself. A thousand things flashed confirmation of it across her mind! Her father's strange fear of Cordova—his absent manner, as if something preyed on him—his talk sometimes of selling his estates in Cuba at any sacrifice, and seeking some other home. Inez remembered, too, that about two years preceding, she had received a letter from him, announcing, in almost incoherent language, his intention of flying to England, and expressing the fear that he would be penniless. He had never come, but a letter did, apologizing for the preceding one, which, he said, had been written and despatched by him while de-

lirious with a fever. She recalled all this, though it had long been forgotten. She felt that Cordova spoke the truth. His manner was too assured for that of a man engaged in a falsehood. So she sank into the seat, and burying her face in her hands, burst into tears.

"Leave me," at length she said, though without looking up. "You have conquered. If I find it is as you say, and my heart forebodes it is, I will marry you, when and where you say."

Something of compunction appeared to come over her hearer on witnessing her evident agony. Indeed, to do him justice, he would never have employed force to win her, if he could have succeeded otherwise. He knelt, and respectfully kissed her hand. But she drew it instantly away.

"Do not mock me," she exclaimed, passionately. "I submit to the sacrifice, to save a worthier victim. Go—at least, for the present."

He bit his lip, and rising to his feet, picked up his hat and dagger, and walked away. As the sound of his receding steps grew fainter, Inez ventured to look after him. She shuddered, and said passionately—

"Will it kill me, or will I stab him to the heart? God forgive me for what I say—I believe I am going mad."

Happily her overtasked nature found relief in a flood of tears, or she might indeed, as she said, have lost her reason.

That day Don Jose had a long interview with his daughter, at the end of which it was publicly announced to the whole household that the marriage of Inez and the Senor Cordova would be celebrated that day month.

The bridegroom expectant remained at the mansion until the next day, when he left for Havana, to make preparations for the approaching nuptials.

Inez had recovered her composure. She was calm, but silent. What was passing in the depths of her heart, no one could tell. She scarcely knew herself.

CHAPTER VI.

Oh! mercy! to myself I cried,
If Lucy should be dead.

Wordsworth.

Our hero had scarcely been left by his second, on the morning of the expected duel, when the American consul was announced. Without waiting to exchange more than a grasp of the hand, that officer asked—

"Are you ready to sail at an hour's notice?"

"Yes," answered Hardy.

"I have found our man," said the consul, lowering his voice, and looking around, as if fearful of being overheard. "And, strange to say, he has been here in our midst. While we have been searching for him through the whole West Indies,

he has been loitering on the promenade, or playing monte in the gambling rooms."

A wild suspicion flashed across Hardy at these words: he put his hand to his brow and said,

"His name?"

"The Senor Cordova. He pretended to be a gentleman of fortune, looking out for a place to settle."

"The same," exclaimed our hero. "Good Heavens, to think of Inez!"

He started up as he spoke, and began to walk the room with rapid strides and an excited air.

"What is the matter?" said the consul. "What do you mean? Do you know anything of this villain?"

At these words Hardy stopped, and recollecting how strange his demeanor must appear, checked himself sufficiently to acquaint his listener with all that he knew of Cordova. He narrated their meeting at the house of Don Jose, the attentions of Cordova to Inez, his own return to the city, the rencontre at the monte table, and the promise of his rival to meet him in the morning. When he had finished his story, he added,

"And now, for heaven's sake, tell me all you know. In what direction has he fled?"

The consul listened in astonishment to Hardy's story, and replied,

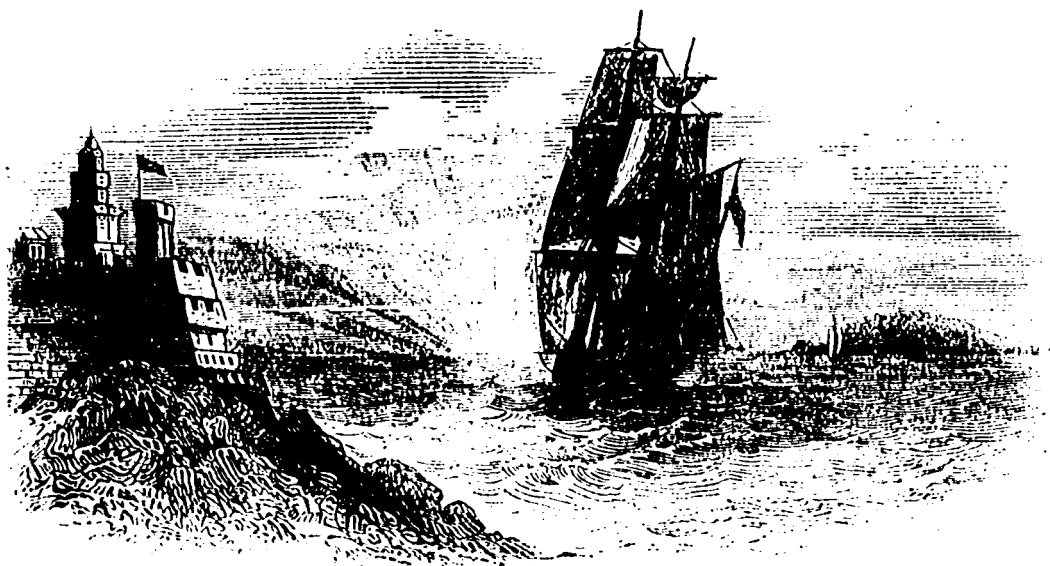
"What I know is this. It seems this Cordova, or rather the Black Rover, for such is the name he is best known by, determined, a few month's ago, in consequence of the hot pursuit set on foot against him, to take a holiday for awhile and play the grand cavalier. For this purpose he left most of his crew at a station he had, among some low islands off the coast, where they were to pass for fishermen if their retreat should be discovered. With the rest, who were his most trusty adherents, he sailed for this port in a clipper of a schooner, which he had captured. The vessel has been laying in the harbor the chief part of the time since, though for the sake of appearances, she has made one trip to New Orleans and back. Meantime the bold villain has been playing the millionaire to perfection, giving out vague hints that he comes from Mexico, to account for his wealth. A part of his history you are acquainted with. I had heard of his endeavors to obtain the hand of the lady in question, and indeed it is that which has led to his detection."

The consul here paused for a moment, and then resumed.

"It seems the scoundrel has a wife living, a woman to whom he was married about two years ago in Spanish St. Domingo, at which period he was nominally residing in that island, though actually spending most of his time here, engaged it is supposed, in fomenting a conspiracy, the existence of which, though never proved, was strongly suspected at that time. However, I may be doing him injustice. He had not at that period taken up the piratical trade, but, a few years before he had

commanded a slaver, so that he was serving an apprenticeship, you see, to the craft. Well, he suddenly disappeared, and his wife, from that day until yesterday, heard nothing of him. But yesterday she saw him in the street, for she has removed to the city, and immediately recognized him. He was coming out of his hotel at the time. She entered, and there met his valet, the same who had attended him when they were married. It seems his servant, though a pirate himself, was conscience-struck at the double marriage his master projected: at least he pretended to be so, though perhaps he was only alarmed at the audacity of Cordova in braving discovery: at any rate, on sight of the injured wife, he became very much frightened, begged her not to betray him, and offered to turn informer. The woman is a true Spanish Creole, and terribly vindictive. She de-

termined at once to sacrifice her deceiver to justice, and immediately laid the whole story before the authorities. Measures were taken to secure the pirate, as well as his valet; but the latter meantime had repented of his treachery; for when the officers arrived at the hotel, at a late hour last night, they found that neither the valet nor his master had been at home for some time. Subsequent investigations have revealed that Cordova, attended by a single individual, hired a small boat towards midnight at the quay, and was set on board his schooner, which had been cleared for New Orleans a second time some days before, though kept waiting under various pretences, dropped down with the tide and went to sea. Early this morning the craft was seen on her way to the Gulf. I have learned these facts, though they are yet kept a profound secret; but the authorities



knowing your purpose in being here, thought your brigantine might overtake him. I something doubt their anxiety, however, to have him overtaken, or else they would have sent to arrest him earlier last night. There have been such things as connivance with pirates known here before."

Hardy listened to this narrative with agitated feelings. The love he bore Inez made him shudder to think of the gulf she had escaped. He longed to be on board the brigantine, and in pursuit of the audacious villain. When the consul mentioned the course which the piratical craft had taken, he remembered that it was in the direction of the mansion of Don Jose, which, as we have said, was visible from the sea; and a terrible suspicion flashed across him, that, driven to desperation, he now might cast anchor long enough to visit the plantation and carry off Inez. Such things had been done in former times, and this man was evidently prepared for any crime. Hardy mentioned his suspicions to the consul.

"Like enough," said that individual. "The villian's dislike to you would lend him an additional inducement; and the execution of the affair would be so easy, for he has a start of twelve hours, quite sufficient to attack the plantation, and get off before a pursuit. Besides, from his conduct here, he is evidently a man dazzled by the thoughts of bold exploits, and this one would suit his taste exactly."

"There is not a moment to be lost. Fortunately, we are ready to sail at five minutes warning," said our hero, with considerable excitement. "Oh! if the wretch has dared to do this thing, I will follow him to the ends of the earth, but what I have revenge."

"I have done every thing on my part to facilitate your departure. You have but to weigh anchor, and be off. There—" and he extended his hand as he spoke, "good bye—and may God prosper you."

Our hero wrung the proffered hand, and seizing

his cap and arms, without waiting to look after his baggage, rushed into the street, and thence made his way to the quay. The brigantine was lying in the stream, with her boats hoisted in, ready, as her commander said, to depart at a moment's warning. Hardy now had reason to congratulate himself on the strict discipline he maintained on board his vessel—never allowing more than one or two of her officers to be absent, and always keeping her in a condition to go to sea immediately. Fortunately there were none, either of her crew or officers, now on shore, for all had gone off to her the preceding evening, when our hero had ordered his brother aboard. It was but the work of a moment for Hardy to call a boat; and in a short time he stepped on the deck of his vessel. His first words were—

"All hands make sail. Up anchor, my lads!"

The men immediately sprang to the windlass, though surprise was depicted on every face, and many a rough tar asked his messmate what this sudden order to get to sea betokened.

"Loose all sails—sheet home, and hoist the top-sail—trip anchor," were the orders that followed, delivered in quick succession.

The brigantine soon began to feel the force of the wind, the water gurgling under her stern as she moved through the water.

"Hoist away your jib," thundered the officer of the deck.

The vessel now paid off, and soon all sails were set, when the brigantine gallantly held on her course, dashing the clear, bright water in showers over her fore-castle. The morning was without a cloud; a fresh breeze was blowing; all in the harbor was astir; and thus, with every thing combining to excite and exhilarate them, the crew of

the bold craft watched their progress. Soon the entrance to the harbor was past, and the blue expanse of the ocean opened before them. The brigantine was now hauled on a wind, and her course laid in the same direction the pirate had taken.

Until they were fairly under way, our hero's attention was absorbed by his vessel; but now that they were out at sea, dark and troubled fancies began to perplex him. In imagination he saw Inez forcibly torn from her home, and carried away in the bold arms of a licentious freebooter. As he counted the hours during which the Rover had the start of him, his heart sank within him, and he almost despaired of the pursuit. The whole of that morning he walked the quarter-deck, with quick and agitated steps—now glancing at the sails, to see what more the brigantine could carry, and now sweeping the horizon with his glass, to discover whether they yet approached the coast in the vicinity of the mansion of Don Jose.

At last the long desired headland rose in view, on rounding which, our hero knew he should behold the dwelling of Inez. But when the coast beyond the promontory opened to sight, only a thread of blue smoke was visible, where he had expected to see the white mansion. By the aid of his glass, he distinguished a smoking heap of ruins—all that remained of the dwelling. A crowd of negroes was around the spot; but no signs of their master, or of any female form, were discernible. Our hero could scarcely restrain his horror and anxiety at this spectacle. Was Inez murdered, or a captive? Either alternative seemed equally agonizing, though neither might be true—the fire possibly being only an accident. The minutes appeared hours, until the brigantine had arrived off the spot, which she did about noon.

(To be concluded in the next Number.)

THE BLACK ROVER.

A STORY OF THE WEST INDIES.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

(Concluded from page 126.)

CHAPTER VII.

And where his frown of hatred darkly fell,
Hope, withering, fled, and mercy sighed farewell.
The Corsair.

THERE never was a period, perhaps, since the days of the buccaneers, when piracy was so common in the West Indies, as in 1816. The long wars which had vexed the civilized world for more than twenty years, had just been brought to a close, and thousands of discharged soldiers, seamen, and persons of broken fortunes, who had been demoralized by the contest, were now thrown on society, too indolent for honest labor. These men naturally became outlaws. The Archipelago of the West Indies furnished a comparatively safe field for their operations, since it nourished a thriving commerce on which to prey, besides affording various safe places of retreat in case of pursuit.

The leaders of the numerous predatory bands were as different as the crews they commanded. Some were ruffians of the most vulgar description, but others had been originally persons of education, birth, and fortune. Among these latter was Cordova. Born of a good family, in Spain, he had early sought fortune in the colonies, where he had amassed a considerable portion of wealth, while yet a young man, it was said, by the slave trade. The vice of gambling, however, proved his ruin. In one week he lost all that he had obtained, by a run of ill fortune, at monte. He then engaged in various desperate enterprises, among which was the attempted conspiracy in Cuba, which introduced him to the acquaintance of Don Jose, and gave him his hold on that gentleman. From the moment that he learned that his host had a daughter, Cordova resolved to wed her, and, with her, the wealth of her parent. That he was already married, he considered no obstacle, for he had already deserted his wife, in whose fortune he had been deceived.

About eighteen months before our story opens, Cordova had accidentally met two or three of his old crew, in Havana, and had there conceived the design of taking up the profession of a rover. His followers had been engaged in the pursuit for

more than a year, and knew a secret, and admirable spot for headquarters. Indeed, the band was already organized, the retreat partially fortified, and nothing was wanting but a leader. Their former one having unfortunately been captured, with a part of his crew, had just expiated his career by the garote. Cordova closed with the offer at once. For more than a twelvemonth he ravaged the Archipelago, with a boldness and success which eclipsed all former captains of his trade, and won for him the terrible name of the Black Rover, in consequence of the color of his flag.

He had not, however, forgotten his connexions with Don Jose; and, more than once during the interval, had visited his fellow conspirator. In justice to the old man, it must be told, that he never suspected the true character of his visitor. Cordova passed himself off as a gentleman of fortune, from Mexico, and as he always had money at his command, his credulous host believed him. Still Don Jose would scarcely have pledged the hand of his only child to his visitor, but for the hold the latter had on him. A few weeks before our tale begins, Cordova, partly in consequence of the hot pursuit after him, and partly to be introduced to his bride, had left his piratical station, and come boldly to Havana, with the intention, if he succeeded in his scheme, to retire from his profession.

Up to this period he had sought to obtain Inez, only in consequence of her wealth. But from the first moment he saw her, he loved her for herself. The affection of such a man had, of course, more passion in it than sentiment; but, nevertheless, in his debased way, he loved her with his whole soul. We have seen his jealousy of Hardy, and his inexorable determination to have Inez. He left her father's house, congratulating himself on his success, and resolving, as soon as possible after his marriage, to transfer himself and her wealth to the United States, where he might live in security. There was no penitence, however, in his thus abandoning his profession: it was merely a selfish resolution to avoid every chance of future detection and punishment.

In insulting Hardy at the monte table, he had

gratified his hatred of his rival; and he would have met him on the appointed field, but for the necessity of instant flight. Cordova's discovery, as narrated by the American consul, was substantially true. He would have fallen into the net prepared for him, and been arrested, if he had returned home after the collision at the gaming table; but, during the time he was consulting with his second, his valet had found him out, and betrayed the peril he was in. The treachery of the servant was forgiven for his present conduct, and the two prepared to fly. As a last refuge, if the game he was playing should fail, Cordova had provided the schooner we have spoken of; and the time had now arrived to employ her.

It was not until the vessel was under way, and all fear of arrest over, that the rover's thoughts recurred to Inez. He could not bring himself to abandon her. All hope of obtaining her fortune was now past, but was her person entirely beyond his reach? Might it not be possible to run down the coast, land, and carry her off? Her father would never consent to her wedding an outlaw, but would sacrifice his own life first; of this Cordova felt assured.

"But," said the bold, calculating villain, "if I should once possess myself of her person, I could render union with me irremediable. I might retire with her to the States, or even to Europe—anywhere where detection would be impossible, and whither Don Jose would be glad to follow me for his child's sake, with what of his wealth he could transfer. I thus secure my bride, and perhaps a fortune. If the old miser," he said, with a scowl of rage, "will not listen to my terms, why then, his daughter is disgraced forever; by St. Jago, mine she shall be, as wife or leman, and with him shall rest the choice."

Full of this bold, remorseless determination, the desperate ruffian went on deck and remained there until the schooner came abreast of Don Jose's plantation. The morning was just beginning to break, when this happened. Cordova instantly called all hands, and laying the vessel to, embarked with most of his crew, in the schooner's boat. Landing at the foot of the sloping heights, he led his followers up a winding path, well known to him, from his residence at the estate; and, after proceeding about a mile and a half, reached and surrounded the mansion.

Inez was already up, but her father had not yet risen, when the house servant, running in, acquainted her with the appearance of armed men about the house. She instantly repaired to her parent's chamber, to awake him, and assist him to rise. Cordova, leaving his men outside, entered the usual sitting room, where, finding no one, he called to a slave, and ordered Don Jose to be summoned. The servant, recognizing the visitor, lost something of her terror, though the arms carried by Cordova and his men, still filled her with mis-

givings. Instead of departing on her errand, she joined some of her fellow slaves, and was engaged in canvassing this curious affair with them, when Cordova, losing patience, advanced immediately to the chamber of Don Jose.

The old man had, by this time risen, and was preparing to come forth. Both he and his daughter started back at the unexpected appearance of Cordova, at his angry mien, at his carrying arms. Don Jose stopped short, and Inez drew close to him.

"You astonish me, Senor," said the old man, with some haughtiness, "by this intrusion, and the manner of it. You bear arms too, and I hear that armed men surround the house—what means it?"

"I have few minutes to waste in words, Don Jose," said Cordova, while an angry spot gathered on his cheek. "I appear before you to claim my bride, and wish her to get ready at once."

"Stop," said Don Jose with dignity, throwing one arm around Inez, who clung to him, though her proud eyes flashed anger and defiance at this insolent speech of her lover's. "Stay, you have said enough, Senor. When I promised to give you my child, I expected I was bestowing her on a gentleman; but, by your present conduct, I find I was mistaken. I am an old man, but I still have a sword, and I give my Inez to no one, who comes claiming her as a freebooter, with insult and an armed force."

Cordova laughed bitterly, and advancing, laid a hand rudely on the arm of Inez.

"Mark you, Don Jose," he said slowly and angrily; "you know I hold your life in my hands. I scorn to send you to the scaffold. Circumstances, however, render it necessary that I should leave Cuba at an hour's notice, and I have sailed accordingly. My schooner is visible from yonder window. Before I go, I wish to secure my bride. Now, these are my terms. Confide your daughter to me, I will marry her at the first port. You can remain behind to turn your estates into cash, and in due time, may follow us to New Orleans; for it will be necessary that we all leave this island; nay, the Spanish dominions. Refuse these terms, and I will carry off your child before your eyes, and afterwards denounce you to the authorities, putting into their hands certain letters which I hold."

It would be impossible to describe the indignation which gathered visibly in the old man's face, as he listened to this insolent proposition. What! trust his child to a man who could demand her in this way, and come prepared to take her by force if refused! The blood of a hundred ancestors burned in his veins at the degrading proposition. He no longer thought of himself. Life was nothing, compared to the insult to his daughter's name. He now saw Cordova in his true light, as an outlaw; though he little suspected, even yet, his real profession.

"Villain," he said, drawing haughtily back, and shaking off Cordova's hold upon the arm of Inez; "miscreant, monster—begone!"

Inez felt all that her father felt, and if contempt and indignation, expressed in the eyes, could have blasted Cordova, he would have sunk at her feet powerless; but she soon reflected that their insolent visitor had the means of doing all he threatened, unless time for assistance could be obtained. The slaves were already off to their work in the fields, but if they could be summoned, Inez saw that there might be hope.

"Speak him fair, father," she said, endeavoring to school her countenance to more civility of expression. "Perhaps you misunderstand each other. Let me withdraw until you can talk the affair over."

But Inez was no match for Cordova in deception. His keen eye was instantly fixed upon her searchingly, and continued to regard her until she turned away embarrassed.

"Nay!" said the rover, with a mocking smile, "that will not do, fair Inez. You cannot summon aid, even if you leave us, for I have surrounded the house, and your egress would be stopped. I give you five minutes to make up your mind. But this rely on—you go with me, either willingly or unwillingly."

What boots it to narrate the scene which followed! The old man, all his Castilian blood boiling in his veins, heaped curses, taunts, and threats on Cordova, defying him to single combat; and when he found all in vain, struggled with unavailing strength to defend his child. Inez clung to her parent, and tried first menaces, and then threats, but her cries and resistance were useless. She was, at the expiration of the period mentioned by Cordova, torn from her parent's arms, and carried off in a swoon.

Enraged at this result of his mission, the rover ordered the mansion to be given up to pillage, a conclusion, perhaps, which he could not have averted in any event. When his followers had satisfied their rapacity, the house was fired, Cordova, by this act, defying the pursuit of the whole country.

Don Jose, stunned and bleeding, was left stretched on the ground, where our hero, when he landed, found him surrounded by a few faithful slaves.

CHAPTER VIII.

O heavenly breath,
Fill thou my sails.

Old Play.

THE first proceeding of Hardy, when he heard from Don Jose the particulars of the abduction of Inez, was to raise his clenched hands to the sky, and take a solemn oath to revenge her.

"By all my hopes of heaven—by the memory of my mother—by the sanctity of the Virgin her-

self," he said, "I swear to pursue this villain, if needs be, to the ends of the earth. Living or dead, I will restore Inez to your arms, Don Jose, or perish in the attempt."

There was no time to be wasted, if success was to be expected; for she now had been gone six hours. Wringing the hand of Don Jose, and ordering the slaves to bear him to the nearest plantation, our hero took a hasty leave of the heart-broken old man, and hurried to the beach, by the same path Cordova had taken. His men had caught something of his own ferocious thirst for revenge, and the boat, propelled by their vigorous arms soon reached the side of the brigantine. In five minutes the gallant craft was under way, with every inch of her canvass spread, and the men busily engaged in wetting it down from the truck to the deck.

The whole nature of Hardy had been changed by the abduction of Inez. The thought of her in the power of this remorseless villain drove him almost to madness: he felt as if he could sacrifice years of his life to know that she would come to no harm. He walked the deck incessantly, and with quick and nervous strides, his telescope ever in his hand, pausing often to sweep the horizon with his glass, but alas! always in vain. Not a sail, answering the description of the schooner, was anywhere in sight.

At last, about three hours after the brigantine had resumed her course, the lookout in the cross-trees hailed,

"Sail, ho!"

"Whereaway?" cried Hardy, leaping on a cannonade, and looking first around the horizon, and then at the speaker.

"Right over the starboard fore-chains."

"Can you make her out?"

"She's a fore-and-aft, I think."

"What's her course?"

"The same as our own, sir, I judge."

"She must be the rover," cried Hardy, in excitement. The crew shared his agitation, and every eye was turned in the direction of the strange sail, hoping to be the first to catch a glimpse of her from the deck. Fifteen minutes passed, during which our hero grew more nervous, and paced the weather-side of the quarter-deck with gradually increasing rapidity.

"Masthead!" at last he hailed.

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Do we gain on her?"

"We do, sir."

"Are you sure she is a schooner?"

"I am, sir."

"And she is on the same track as ourselves?"

"She is, sir."

A smothered huzza burst from the crew at the conclusion of these rapid questions and answers, for nearly every man now felt assured that the stranger was the rover, and that they outsailed him. Still there were some who were not so san-

guine, and among these was Hardy. At the end of another quarter of an hour he again hailed, "Can you see her hull yet, mast-head?" he said.

"It is just visible, sir."

"Is she crowded with men?"

"No, sir—there seems no more than common to a trader."

"Is she armed?"

"She is not, sir."

This answered exactly to the description of Cordova's schooner, and even Hardy, who had been afraid to hope too soon, now began to believe he had his adversary in sight. The stranger was soon visible from deck, and our hero's telescope was bent upon her. His observations verified the statement of the look-out. The schooner was evidently Cordova's.

Suddenly the strange sail hauled her course, and went off sharp upon a wind. This might, or might not be in consequence of the brigantine's vicinity: the general opinion was that it was a manœuvre to discover whether the latter was in chase. The schooner, by this change of course, had the weather-gauge of the brigantine; but the American craft could beat to windward like a duck, so it was with unconcealed glee that Hardy saw this. He promptly ordered the helm to be put down, and the sails to be trimmed close; and in less time than we have taken to describe it, the brigantine was on the track of the fugitive.

"A stern chase is a long chase," cried our hero, rubbing his hands with delight; "but, on a wind, I fear nothing. If the villain thinks this his best point of sailing, I am sure it is mine—and let him stick to it, and I'll overhaul him before midnight. Ah! but there is no moon—is there, quarter-master?"

For some time all eyes eagerly watched the stranger to see if he changed his course; but fortunately, as the pursuers thought, he did not. The brigantine, with every thing set that could draw, was in hot pursuit, cleaving through the sea like a bird on the wing, the water flying right and left before her.

The chase continued for more than two hours, the brigantine slowly gaining on the schooner. It was now nearly the close of the dog-watch, and though the sun was yet comparatively high, his setting must soon arrive, when, under cover of the darkness, the enemy might yet escape. Three bells had now struck, when a gush of flame streamed from the deck of the schooner, followed suddenly by a puff of smoke, and immediately a cannon ball was seen making its way towards the brigantine, skipping from billow to billow.

"I' faith," said old Transom, "I don't think we are near enough to be hit, my jackanapes, though you have taken us by surprise with your long Tom. Who'd have thought you had the old fellow concealed under that caboose! But you

can't reach us," he continued, addressing the shot, as it sank into the water about an eighth of a mile off. "I told you so. Now, with the captain's leave, we'll see what we can do. Our bull-dog can bark further, or I am mistaken."

The long twenty-four pounder, which we have described as hung on a swivel amidships, and of which Transom was the captain, was made ready at a nod from Hardy, and, after a long and careful adjustment, fired by the hand of Transom himself. This ball fell short also, but only about a pistol shot. Almost simultaneously another discharge was made from the enemy's piece, with equal want of success.

"Come, now, old growler," said Transom, patting his gun as he would a favorite dog, "you must do better this time. The scoundrels think to cripple us, and get off under cover of the darkness. You must cripple them, my hearty. Huzza—there we have 'em!"

As he held this familiar colloquy, he had sighted and discharged his piece. The ball, with unerring aim, went through the mainsail of the schooner.

This damage was not sufficient, however, to affect the speed of the enemy, and the pursuit continued for some time longer, several shots on both sides taking effect, but none doing material damage. Four bells had now struck, and the sun was fast declining. For some time our hero had been very uneasy.

"Let me sight your piece, Transom," he said, walking forward. "In half an hour we shall have no more daylight, and then good bye to this villain! I and that gun are acquainted of old."

"Ay! captain, try her," said Transom, stepping back, though with some chagrin. "The piece is obstinate to-day—I do 'nt think I ever saw it shoot so wild."

Hardy was now busily engaged in sighting the gun. Transom, when he had delivered himself of his speech, stooped down and followed the angle of the piece with his eye, while our hero continued to arrange her. At length, every thing was done to Hardy's satisfaction, and the match was applied. The veteran still remained stooping, while the smoke blew back, one eye closed that he might the better watch the course of the cannon ball.

"True as a rifle-ball," he cried. "There it goes—huzza! it has cut away his fore-sail gaff. Huzza! huzza!"

Transom, as he spoke, leaped to his feet, waving his hand enthusiastically around his head. What he said was correct. The huge fore-sail came down by the run, the gaff having been shot away just where the peak halyards upheld it; and, as a consequence, the immense sheet of canvass fell over the schooner's side into the water, dragging her forcibly around almost broadside to the wind. The greatest confusion was immediately perceptible on board the chase. To add to the lucky character of the shot, the sail had fallen over the

The moment comes—
It is already come.—*Wallenstein.*

long Tom, so that the gun was, for the present, useless. Owing to this accident, the brigantine now gained rapidly on her enemy, while Transom, who had resumed his piece, continued to fire, now talking to his gun, now rating those around him.

"Give it to 'em lively, my lads," he cried, "there we hulled her, for I saw the splinters fly. What are you about, you lazy monkey-boy—spring quickly, or I'll knock you a cable's length. Home with the charge—home it is! Now, I'll give 'em a sockdolager—we'll soon have him spouting blood like a whale.—Ha! it has cut away his topsail—hurrah for old Nantucket—that's as good as the captain's shot, a'most—hurrah!"

By this time, however, the crew of the schooner had got out a new spar, and the foresail was once more hoisted. As soon as the vessel felt the influence of the additional canvass, she shot off on her course with such a velocity, that for some time there was but little perceptible gain on the part of her pursuers. The pirate's long Tom was, by this time, disengaged, and a happy shot striking the brigantine's fore-top-gallant mast, the spar came down with all its hamper. In consequence of this the velocity of the two vessels became more nearly equalized.

Darkness now began to gather on the face of the waters. The sun had sunk in the midst of a pile of gorgeous clouds, and for a few minutes there was twilight; but this was soon passed; and then, of course, night and gloom, except what faint radiance the stars shed around. For more than an hour the chase continued, an incessant firing being kept up from both vessels. At last, through the shadowy obscurity, what seemed a low island, was discovered, fringed with a dense growth of trees, and toward this the pirate schooner steered slowly. As she approached it, Hardy expected to see her strike, and for greater security to himself, ordered a man in the chains to sound. Suddenly the chase totally disappeared in the dark shadows cast by the trees. The only explanation of this, which our hero could give, was that the pirate had entered some river, the mouth of which was concealed, as is frequent in low, lagoon islands, by overhanging trees. Still Hardy advanced boldly, steering directly in the track of the fugitive. All at once the brigantine grounded on a sand bank, with a violence that threw every one from his feet. Hardy was the first to recover himself.

"Boarders, ahoy!" he cried, "muster all, and at once. Let the boats be got out, and manned. That villain has slid into some secret cove, or river, while we have grounded on the edge of the channel. We must follow him to his den, and drag him forth, my lads; for, let it never be said, that a scoundrel like this foiled American seamen. Every man to his post!"

But what, meantime, was the fate of Inez? Did she, in the above action with the schooner, hear the sounds of conflict which announced the pursuit? Or, was she still ignorant of the succor at hand?

Torn from her parent in a state of insensibility, she was borne thus to the boat, in the strong arms of seamen, who relieved each other in the task—Cordova himself assisting. Her personal servant, alone of all the household, was allowed to accompany her. The rover had ordered this female slave to collect such portions of her mistress' wardrobe, as were most convenient, and with this command Julia complied, though torn by the conflicting sentiments of love for her mistress, and fear of the marauders.

The rough motion of the boat, and the fresh air of the ocean, revived Inez. She opened her eyes familiarly, and regarded with wonder the strange faces around her: then, as consciousness slowly returned, an expression of agony rose to her countenance, and she turned her looks towards the land, where a column of black smoke announced the conflagration of her father's dwelling. Her glance next rested on Cordova, when she closed her eyes with a shudder. Julia sat by her side weeping.

"Taste this," said Cordova kindly, presenting a flask to the lips of Inez, "it will revive you."

She shook her head mournfully. The rover, really touched, began to fan her with his sombrero: she raised her eyelids, and seeing who it was, said:

"Oh! if you would please me, take me back to my father. Do with me afterwards as you will, but do not now separate me from him. He is dying, and I am away—oh! take me back."

She half rose from her reclining position, and clasped her hands, looking up into Cordova's face, with a glance of the most piteous entreaty. Julia burst into vociferous lamentations.

A dark frown gathered on the brow of the outlaw, and, turning away, he ordered the men, with an oath, to pull faster; while Inez, exhausted by the effort, and rendered hopeless forever, fell back in a new fainting fit. In this condition she was lifted on board the schooner, and deposited on a locker in the cabin.

No sooner had the seamen departed, who had borne the senseless girl below, than Julia, with a light, quick step, advanced to the door, which she bolted and locked, after which she dragged a trunk and some loose furniture, she found near and piled them at the foot of the companion-way.

In a short time Inez began to show signs of returning life. She heaved a deep sigh, opened her eyes inquiringly, and recognizing her attendant,

smiled faintly. Then she strove to rise on one arm.

"Lie still, dear mistress," said the girl, again giving way to tears; "you will only faint again if you rise. Oh! that I should have lived to see this day."

"Where am I?" said Inez, looking around. "Ah! now I recollect! my poor, poor father." She covered her eyes, and fell back with a heavy sigh. Julia now knelt by her mistress and began to fan her, occasionally wetting her temples with water. She was a faithful and quick-witted girl, the best companion her mistress could have had. For a long while she sat in silence, while Inez moaned at intervals, and at intervals uttered exclamations of anguish at the separation from her parent. At last, when the paroxysm of grief had somewhat subsided, Julia said,

"Do you know where we are mistress?"

Inez opened her eyes in inquiry, for there was that in the tone of the speaker, which meant more than words.

"We are on board a pirate," said Julia, lowering her voice to a whisper.

Inez gave a start, uttering a shriek; but the hand of her servant was instantly placed on her mouth.

"Hush," said Julia, "or we are undone. We must not show alarm, or all is over with us. Oh! my dear mistress," she said, bursting into tears, unable wholly even to control herself; "we shall both be murdered, and perhaps this night; the Holy Virgin protect us."

It was now the part of Inez to comfort her slave.

"Alas!" she said, "death would be a blessing to one of us, if we are indeed in the hands of pirates. As for you, Julia, you have little to fear. But you are sure you know the characters of these men?"

"I heard and saw enough while you were in the boat, and after we got on board, to convince me. What shall we do?"

"In God is my trust," said Inez, reverently lifting her eyes to heaven.

An hour and more passed, during which the females were undisturbed, but at the end of that time a strong hand was laid on the lock of the cabin door, which being found fastened, was shaken roughly. The entrance, however, resisted every effort, and after a moment of hesitation, Cordova, for he it was, turned away.

The morning wore on, and the two females remained undisturbed; noon came and went, yet the effort to enter the cabin was not repeated; and now it was the third hour after the meridian. Suddenly the tread of feet was heard on deck, followed by the rattling of blocks, and immediately afterwards it became evident, by the change in the motion of the vessel, that she had altered her course. Inez was kneeling at the time on the locker, just below the cabin windows, and in-

voluntarily her eyes looked out. What was her joy to recognize, far down to leeward, a sail apparently on the same tack as themselves.

"Julia," she cried excitedly; "come hither. Do you see yonder white speck? that is a sail—perhaps it has been sent to our rescue. You have sharp eyes—can you discern what kind of a vessel it is?"

Julia looked long and eagerly at the distant craft, and at last said,

"Him what you call, not a schooner, nor a brig, but a brigantine."

Inez clasped her hands in fervent gratitude.

"I thought so," she said, "but dared scarcely to trust my eye-sight. You are sure it is a brigantine?"

"Yes, ma'am, and a vessel of war, too—I know it by the way its tall masts rake aft. I often used to see her in harbor at Havana."

"It is he—it is he," articulated Inez, raising her eyes above. "Oh! Heavenly Father, I thank thee."

"It is who?" asked Julia, her big eyes staring in wonder.

Inez blushed and looked away as she answered in a tone of assumed indifference.

"The American gentleman who visited us a fortnight ago. He is the commander of a vessel like that in chase of us, and his purpose in visiting these seas was to capture a renowned pirate, called the Black Rover."

"I have often heard of this pirate—he is said to be a terrible man."

"I fear we are in his power," answered Inez. "Light begins to break in on my mind, and a thousand circumstances convince me that Cordova is the Black Rover himself."

A look of the utmost terror rose to the face of Julia as her mistress spoke, and crossing herself devoutly, she began hurriedly to tell her beads.

Several hours of agonizing suspense now ensued, during which the two females continued to watch the brigantine, nor did the action which followed, frighten them from their posts, for curiosity prevailed over alarm. When the fore-sail was cut away, the watchers knew it by the increased bustle on deck, and the falling off in the speed of the vessel; and their hearts beat high with hope. But when the spar was repaired, and the schooner again under rapid way, their fears once more arose, until, when the brigantine lost her fore-top gallant yard, they sank into complete despair. Night was now gathering around. Suddenly Inez heard the schooner brush by what seemed to be trees, but for a moment, the gloom was so intense that she could see nothing. Then the vessel appeared to emerge into calm water, for the rocking motion ceased; and immediately afterwards a loud knocking was heard at the door, followed by a voice demanding entrance. Too well Inez knew that voice. It was that of the Black Rover himself!

"Open," he cried, then followed an oath; and finding that the door was not unfastened, he dealt it a tremendous blow with some heavy article, so that it fell from its hinges. "Ha! you think to shut me out—but it is in vain. Up and follow me. I have no moments to spare. Do not fancy you can escape either, for nothing short of an army can tear you from my grasp, and I will not yield you, by Santiago, while I have life."

A seaman behind him bore a lantern, by the light of which Inez saw that his person was grimed with powder, and his countenance flushed with excitement. She started to her feet. Had there been any weapon within reach, she would have snatched it to defend herself, but there was none. Cordova noticed her glance and understood it: with a mocking laugh he seized her in his strong arms and bore her struggling out of the cabin. At the same moment, Julia was grasped by a sailor, who dragged her shrieking in another direction.

CHAPTER X.

Robin Rover
Said to his crew,
Up with the black flag,
Down with the blue.

Old Song.

"A word with you, Captain Hardy, if you please," said old Transom, when the boarders had been mustered and were about to embark.

"What is it, Transom?"

"I think I know this spot, sir, I was here before the war: it was then a fishing station. The entrance is the devil's own, sir; and if we are not careful, we shall all be blown sky-high before you get in."

"Ah! how is that?"

"Why you see, sir, a narrow channel, like a river, puts in under those trees ahead, and winding for about a furlong, leads to a wide, shallow lagoon. There are a dozen points along this entrance, indeed one at every turn, where a battery could be planted, to rake any one attempting to force it; and as this is evidently the retreat of the pirates, depend on it, they have taken every precaution to render it impregnable."

Hardy felt the force of this, and mused a moment, biting his lip. Eager and resolute as he was to rescue, or at least avenge Inez, he knew it would not do to sacrifice his men, more especially as the buccaneers were probably as numerous as the crew, and victory, therefore was at the best doubtful.

"Have you anything to suggest, further, Transom?" said our hero, noticing that the veteran seemed as if he had more to say.

"Yes, sir. I know a path, if it is not overgrown, by which the enemy can be taken in the rear—"

"Ha! have his position turned?"

"Just so, sir. The path strikes the above line about a quarter of a mile to somewhere here, and, making a circuit through the forest, comes out on the edge of the lagoon, a considerable distance above the marsh and the channel. Now, sir, if I was to suggest, it would be that you should send a heavy detachment around in that direction, retaining another in front here as a feint."

"I comprehend," quickly replied Hardy. "It shall be done. How long will it require to make the circuit?"

"I should say, sir, about half an hour—perhaps three quarters—the last would be the nearest."

No more was said, but the crew was divided by Hardy into two portions, and while much the largest one was detached under the guidance of Transom, the other was retained by our hero, who determined to lead in person the attack in front, which was to be made at the end of three quarters of an hour.

This interval passed in breathless suspense. Occasionally the listeners would fancy that they heard noises from the lagoon; but no sign of a living thing was perceptible, to give countenance to this, under the deep shadow of the trees that almost overhung the entrance. The men lay on their oars, their boarding caps on their heads, and their arms beside them, keeping such profound silence that the dash of the water on the beach was heard continually.

Fifty times, during as many minutes, Hardy pulled out his watch. At length, the appointed moment arrived. He whispered the men to advance, and, with muffled oars, the boats pulled into the entrance.

The instant they passed under the thick shadow of the trees, they found themselves buried in almost total obscurity, the course of the river being only perceptible by the occasional brightness of the water as a stray gleam of starlight penetrated through the overhanging foliage. The men pulled on in silence—passing turn after turn in the stream, their hearts beating quicker at every bend, for they knew the enemy's batteries must soon be at hand. All at once, as they swept around a corner, the gaping mouth of a cannon became visible by the light of a torch held by the gunners. The piece was trailed so that the boats could not avoid coming directly under the line of its fire, when they would probably be sunk, and their crews nearly all slaughtered, if, as was almost certain, the gun was loaded with cannister or grape. Hardy instantly perceived the peril, but there was nothing to be done, however, but to advance and endeavor to pass the critical point as soon as possible.

"Pull away, my lads, he added, "now or never is your time. Pull for your lives."

The men stretched their brawny arms until the ash-blades bent, and almost snapped into two, while the boats shot forward like arrows just dis-

charged from bows. But all would have been in vain, if, at this moment, a loud huzzah had not risen from the direction of the lagoon, followed by the rattle of musketry, sounds which, for an instant, diverted the attention of the gunners.

"There goes old Transom," shouted Hardy. "Now is your time, my braves—one bold dash and we have them. Huzza! we are getting already out of range—on, on, and we are past."

The boats nearly leaped from the water, propelled by the gigantic strokes of the rowers, and, as Hardy said, the danger was now almost past; but, at its crisis, the piece on shore was discharged, and the iron hail came rattling onwards, carrying ruin and death wherever it struck. The hindmost boat suffered severely, half her men being killed or wounded; but only a few scattering shot reached that of Hardy.

"Forward," he cried, springing up in the stern sheets, highly excited, "forward—pull, with a will, boys, pull—give her a wide berth around yonder corner—ah! there is no better shore, or rather it is deserted—another turn and we reach the lagoon—hark! the fight deepens—the lagoon is in sight, and our brave comrades hard at work—pull, boys, pull, or we shall be too late—pull, for the memory of your sweethearts and the honor of the stars and stripes."

The lagoon as he said was now in full view. On either shore were formidable batteries, which could, if manned, have effectually protected the river, but they were now deserted, for the pirates, finding themselves attacked unexpectedly from the rear, had flown to repulse their assailants in that quarter. Now, too late, they perceived their error, as Hardy, cheering with his men, leaped from the boats and attacked the freebooters vigorously. Beset thus on both sides, and still laboring under the disorder arising from surprise, the pirates fought desperately, and, for a while, the scales of battle hung even. Meantime, either through accident or design, a row of cabins which lined the shore of the lagoon took fire, and blazing to the sky, added the roar and light of a conflagration to the scene. The melee was terrific. The crack of the pistol, the clash of cutlasses, the dull sound of steel cleaving the skull, the shouts of the combatants, and the groans of the dying rose in horrible discord. At last the pirates, who had rushed to oppose Hardy, began to give way, and fall back sullenly towards the main body, which still held its ground against the other division of the Americans. At this instant, however, they halted before a tall and powerful form, which, rushing through their midst, rallied them to a new encounter. Though begrimed with smoke and covered with blood, Hardy recognized in the new comer his rival, the Black Rover himself.

The eyes of the two leaders met simultaneously, and for an instant they paused, regarding each other attentively, by the lurid light of the conflagration. A scowl of mortal hate settled on the

dark brow of the pirate; and, stepping out of the ranks of his men, he said:

"Well met, sir. But you have come on an idle errand—you will never see her again." And he laughed in scornful triumph. "Have at you now—all we shall give you here, is six feet of ground."

"Villain!" cried Hardy, almost beside himself with agony and rage; and he sprang to meet his antagonist.

"That for your insolence," said the rover, as he gave our hero a pass, which drew blood, "and that, on account of our duel, which should have come off at Havana!"

"That for the right," cried Hardy, smarting with his wounds; but, watching his opportunity, and dealing a lunge which went to a vital part. "God assoilze your soul!"

The rover fell back, the blood spouting from his wound, and, with a single groan, his spirit fled.

The duel, for such it really was, had caused a cessation of hostilities for the moment; and it was over so quickly that not a blow could be struck on either side, to avert its issue. When they saw their leader perish, a panic seized the pirates, and breaking away in every direction, they sought the shelter of the neighboring thickets, whither the Americans followed in hot pursuit. Hardy, notwithstanding the blood flowed freely from his wounds, was advancing to head the chase, when he heard a wild shriek, and a black female slave rushing forward, threw herself at his feet.

"Oh! save my mistress," she cried, clinging to his knees, "she is locked up in one of the burning cabins. They tore her from me when we entered the lagoon, but I saw whither they conducted her: and I heard Senor Cordova, the Black Rover, I mean, say, when he returned in haste, to prepare for your attack, that sooner than allow her to escape, he would have the house fired where she was confined. He has kept his word, and she is perishing."

Hardy scarcely listened to the conclusion of this address, but flew in the direction of the burning huts, attended by Julia, who, sobbing and narrating by turns, managed to inform him in which cabin to find Inez. It was fortunate that the fabric was lightly built, or Hardy could only have found an entrance when too late; but, beneath the desperate strength with which he struck it, the door immediately gave way, and he rushed in. The cabin was full of smoke.

"Inez—Inez!" he cried.

There was no answer, nor was any one visible.

"Inez—Inez!" he shouted frantically, "Oh! if I have entered the wrong hut—"

At that instant, a puff of air from the open door whirled away the smoke, and he discovered a dark heap lying in a corner. He knew it at once: it was the form of Inez. But, was she living, or dead? He rushed towards it, grasped

it in his arms, and staggered out into the air, more like a madman than a being in the possession of his faculties. Whether it was the cold breeze from the river, or the frantic manner in which he pressed her to him, or both, which revived Inez, we do not know, and cannot pretend to say; but she did revive, for she had only fainted, and opening her eyes, recognized her deliverer. She smiled faintly, and unconsciously pressing our hero's hand, murmured his name, coupling it with a blessing. Hardy knew no more. The pain, loss of blood, and the agitation, all together, overcame him, and he fell heavily to the earth insensible.

The fight was over, the pirates were extirpated, and their fortifications destroyed. It was the morning after the conflict. On the quarter deck of the brigantine, which now lay in the lagoon, and behind a common curtain, screening him from the eyes of the crew, lay the wounded commander, while by his side knelt Inez. He had just awoke from a deep slumber, into which he had fallen after his wounds were dressed, and had

detected her watching. Words had already been spoken, however, on his part, which no after life could recall; and Inez was looking and blushing, though without withdrawing the hand he had taken.

"Nay! sooner than agitate you," at last she said sportively, "which the surgeon says must not be, I will declare that I love you, and have loved you since you saved my life on the wreck. And now you have saved it again," she added, with tears in her eyes. "How shall I ever repay you?"

"I am repaid already," said our hero, pressing that soft hand.

Hardy recovered, and so too, did Don Jose, whom they joined on the ensuing day. Before two months had passed, Inez and our hero were married, when they came to the United States, Don Jose transferring thither most of his fortune.

Hardy has since left the navy, but still lives in dignified retirement, with his yet lovely bride: and often, amid their children's children, together they talk of the Black Rover and his fate.

THE DEBTOR'S CHILD.

A STRAY LEAF FROM A LAWYER'S PORT-FOLIO.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

It was many years ago when I paid my first visit to Boston. One cold, tempestuous night, I found myself returning to my hotel, late in the evening, from an unavoidable business engagement. As the distance was not great, I had set out on foot; and in order to be more speedy, had struck into one of those narrow cross streets which are so common in the North end. Just as I turned a corner, a figure emerged from the shelter of an old, time-decayed mansion, and extending a wan arm, in a faint, girlish voice, now tremulous with cold, said piteously,

"Please, sir, please—if it's only a penny."

I started; for there was something touchingly sad in the low, plaintive tone of the speaker. She was a delicate, sickly looking child, apparently about eleven years of age, and wrapped in an old and tattered garment, which once had been a cloak. It was with difficulty that she could keep the rags together with her blue, cold arm, as the wind hissed and raved along the narrow street. Her whole look was one of utter destitution. Yet there was none of the squalor of willing poverty in that pale and emaciated young countenance. As I paused, looking at her a moment without speaking, she seemed to think that her prayer was disregarded; for gathering her ragged cloak around her shivering form, with a deep sigh and a look of patient submission, she shrank back under the shelter of the old mansion. But as she turned, the light of a lamp streamed over her face, and I saw that in spite of her efforts tears were rolling down her cheeks. It cut me to the heart.

"My little child," said I, kindly, "where do you live?—you are cold and hungry—what has brought you out on such a night as this?"

"Oh! sir," said she, looking up into my face, and bursting into tears again, "I don't feel the cold,—and I ain't used to beg,—but please, sir, if it's only a penny—for brother's sick, and we've no wood to make a fire, and even little Charley hasn't had any thing to eat to-day."

"Good God!" said I, "you don't mean to say they are starving to death, and in such a city as this."

"Oh! sir, what can we do?—we've got no money, and father's in jail for debt? We haven't

eat since yesterday, and brother, I'm afraid, will never get well, sir, again," and she sobbed as if her heart would break.

"Don't cry," said I, "I'll go and see your brother—and, here," offering her some change,—"run and bring them something to eat, and show me the way."

The girl extended her trembling hand, and clutching the money with the eagerness of famine, hastily murmured her thanks, directed me where to find her home, and then gathering her rags around her, hurried down a neighboring street to execute her commission.

It was a withering night, as I have said. The sky overhead was of a dingy black. The cold, sleety rain whirled slantingly along before the gusts of wind that now rattled among the chimneys, roared about the corners, and went howling down the street. The houses around were black with age, and some seemed ready to tumble headlong. Here and there, indeed, a more tottering structure than its fellow was supported by a beam or two from the adjoining tenement; and in many places, from the absence of shutters, and the shattered condition of the casements, it was evident that the habitation within had long been deserted. As I turned into the by-way a still more desolate sight met my eyes. The street was scarcely ten feet wide, narrow, crooked, and utterly destitute of lamps. On either side the tottering frames rose dark into the sky, while a solitary candle glimmered at intervals from some rattling casement. The mouldings of the doors were broken off; the Venitian shutters had mostly rotted from their hinges; and the side walks and door steps were torn up around. The spot looked as if mortal foot had not visited it for years; and I began to think I had mistaken the direction, when I heard a strange step behind me, and turning, beheld the little girl hurriedly following in my rear.

"There, right ahead, sir—turn the next corner," said she, in a voice tremulous with excitement—"this way," and running ahead, she stopped before a low, ruinous door till I came up, when bidding me follow, she entered a narrow passage, groped up a rickety, crooked

staircase, and pushing aside a crazy door, stole noiselessly into the room.

The apartment was low, narrow, and lighted by a solitary candle. The smoky walls were bare, the floor without carpeting, and a bed, a stool, and broken table were the only furniture. There was a chimney-place in one corner, but it looked as if it had not seen a fire for years. Several panes of glass were broken in the casement, in some of which old rags were stuffed, while through others the rain and wind beat, flaring the dim candle, and making the wretched inmates shiver as they drew their rags around them. On the bed lay the wasted form of a little boy, some six or seven years of age, his glassy eye and hollow, hectic cheek, telling a tale of premature decay. A woman cleanly but scantily drest, with a child in her arms, was standing by the bedside of the sufferer, gazing wistfully into his face. Amid all her poverty, it was impossible not to see that she had once been beautiful; and there yet lingered in her care-worn face a soft, almost angelic expression of mingled fortitude and resignation. It was altogether such a face as once seen is rarely forgotten. And then the look of suffering depicted there, telling—oh! how acutely—of the agony of that mother's heart.

Now and then the babe in her arms lifted its little hands and lisped in broken accents for bread, while as she strove to quiet its cries the big tears stole down her pale, wan cheeks, and fell upon the face of the boy.

As we entered she looked up, and noticing a stranger, seemed about to speak, but her little daughter interrupted her.

"Mother, oh! mother," said the girl, running up to her, and unfolding the food she had brought, "see what this good gentleman has given me. Poor little Charley," she continued, addressing the babe, whose outstretched arms betrayed his eagerness to obtain the food, "you needn't cry any longer—brother, couldn't you eat some too?—we shall all have a nice supper, shan't we, dear mother?"

"God in heaven bless you!" murmured the parent, as she turned toward me.

"Hush—not a word, my dear madam," said I, "the wants of your little family and yourself must be attended to."

The eagerness with which the children clutched at the food, showed the extremity to which they had been reduced. The mother apologized for them.

"There, there, my love, don't eat so hungrily," she said, "but it's no wonder since he hasn't had anything to-day."

"Mother!" said the low voice of the sick boy, as he faintly lifted his head from the pillow, "couldn't I have a little water with this"—and he held up a piece of the bread, "I think I could drink some if I had."

"For heaven's sake, my dear madam," I exclaimed, almost affected to tears, as the mother was about rising to go out and obey his request, "remain here, and I will bring the drink—you are yourself sick, you want sustenance too, as you value your children's lives don't expose yourself—I will have some fire made for you, and you shall at least be more comfortable than now."

The mother did not answer. Once or twice she essayed to speak; but her words failed her, and she burst at last into tears.

I performed my errand, and then sought out aid. In an hour a cheery fire was blazing on the hearth; the chinks of the old, tottering, crazy walls, were closed up; the broken panes no longer admitted the wind and rain; such clothing as the late hour permitted me to obtain were provided for the sufferers; and a few little delicacies that are actual necessities in a sick chamber stood upon a table by the poor boy's bedside. Never shall I forget his look of mute thankfulness, as he sucked an orange with his fevered lips; while the overlaid heart of his mother could find no vent except in choking words and tears.

"Oh! mother, if father now was only here," murmured the little fellow, "we might be almost as happy as we used to in our nice house in the country."

"And who is your father, my sweet little fellow?" I asked, "I do not wish to pry into your sorrows wantonly, my dear madam," I continued, addressing the mother, "but if, as I suspect, your husband's difficulties are pecuniary ones, I may, by my profession at least, be of some service to him. Can I aid you in any way?"

"Oh! sir, I never can sufficiently thank you," she sobbed, "but we have not always been as we are now. We were once comfortable, if not rich, and little, little did we think it should ever come to this!" She then told her story.

It was just such a tale as I had often heard, and as happens, alas! to hundreds every year in our larger cities. Her husband had once resided in New York, been a master mechanic of some note, and consequently had lived in a style of corresponding ease and comfort. But he had finally undertaken some speculations, which in the end turned out abortive; he became consequently involved in a train of embarrassments

that grew every year more ruinous; and induced at last to undertake a heavy contract for a range of stores in the hope of redeeming his fortune, he found himself at length, owing to one of those periodical contractions in our money market, unable to prosecute it, and forced to throw up the work under a penalty which would have swept away a fortune ten times as great as his own. In one word—he was reduced to beggary. His character, had he remained in New York, however, would have saved him from being distressed by his creditors, and his numerous acquaintance would have enabled him perhaps in time to re-establish himself; but possessed of a proud and sensitive heart, he could not endure to live among his friends without an equality of fortune, and preferred, like many a one before and since, to drain the cup of poverty to its dregs among strangers. He removed to Boston, and for awhile lived at least without want. But his ill fate finally found him out even there. An old creditor had pressed him for payment, and finally levied an execution on his house a month or two since. Though he was thus broken up he did not as yet despair. He removed to a meaner house, continuing his exertions as a common journeyman. But even here his oppressor found him out, and a second time sold out his little all. To crown all, winter set in, and Spencer found himself without employment. His creditor, too, arrested him, and threw him into prison for debt. His destiny seemed about to be accomplished, for poor, friendless, unknown, and in a strange city, to whom should he apply for aid? His heart sickened within him, the more so when he thought of his meek wife and suffering little ones. And she—angel that she was! but are not all women angels at such times?—how did she bear up against her fate? Day by day she stood at the prison gates long before they were opened, and never left them till the regulations forced her to depart, performing a thousand little kindnesses for her husband, striving by her cheerfulness to soothe his troubled spirit, and endeavoring with her needle to obtain a scanty and uncertain subsistence.

As the winter set in the little boy fell sick; he could no longer come to the prison—and the wife and mother now had to share her time between him and her husband. But when he grew worse, she was not only forced to forego visiting the prison, but found herself unable to earn more than half the pittance she did formerly—and when at last her employer, angry that a garment was not finished in time, refused to employ her further, her wild, agonising decla-

ration that the fear her boy was dying had caused the failure, served only to invoke the rage of the hard-hearted man. Little do we know of the world's obduracy until we have mingled with it. Her sole support thus cut off she almost despaired of human help. In vain she applied everywhere for work—the demand for it was already greater than could be supplied. Poverty, cold, and starvation was before her, but she could have borne it all, had it not been for her little ones. One by one, therefore, their few things had been disposed of in the vain hope that relief from some quarter would arrive. As a last hope her little girl had that evening tried in vain to borrow a mite, and failing in that was driven to beg or die.

It was with a sad heart I left the abode of poverty. I at once determined, if possible, to restore the husband to his family.

It is not necessary to detain the reader with a recapitulation of what I did to effect this purpose. Suffice it to say, I procured the liberation of the father on the following day.

I judged it advisable, however, to precede him home, in order to prepare his family. On my way I called on the physician to inquire after the sick boy. The doctor shook his head, and declared the child to be in the last stage of his disorder. At my urgent request he got into the carriage with me.

Never shall I forget the sight that presented itself when I announced that the father would soon be free. Tears, sobs, and words of gratitude were poured forth, until it grew painful to me. The worthy physician, seeing my embarrassment, took the sick boy's hand in his, and with those mild, soothing tones, so welcome to a sufferer—for they sound like those of a friend—he asked,

"And how do you feel to-night, my little fellow?"

"Better, sir, thank you," said the boy, in a voice so faint that it strangely belied his words. Poor child, he felt indeed stronger, but he little knew it was only the last revival of worn-out nature. The sands were already nearly run out; the cistern was well nigh broken at the fountain; a little while longer and his pure spirit would be at rest. Every one in the room seemed conscious of this, for they had all gathered around his bed, and stood gazing on his wasted form, with sad and tearful eyes. And well might it melt the heart to look on that pallid young face.

After a little while one of the sudden, transitory doses of sickness came upon him, and for awhile, with the physician still holding his pulse, he seemed to sleep. The mother sat on the

other side of the bed, holding a cloth with which she had been bathing his brow, and every now and then turning anxiously to the door, or endeavoring to hide the tears that, one by one, swelled from her eyes, and stole heavily down her cheek. The sister stood at the foot of the bed, looking mournfully at her brother, but she did not know his danger. And the little child, held in a neighbor's arm, gazed wistfully from one to the other, as if to inquire what it all meant. Suddenly the lad started half up in bed, gazing a minute wildly around. His words at first were incoherent, his cheeks crimson, his gestures eager, his eyes glassy and unsettled.

"George, my love, George," sobbed the mother, "don't you know me? It is I that speaks. George, my dear boy—oh, God!" she continued, lifting her eyes to heaven with a look of unutterable agony, "my boy is dying!"

The child seemed to know her voice; it won upon him amid all his delirium; he looked a moment inquiringly into her face, and then extending his thin, bare hand to her, while a smile shot, like dying sunlight across his countenance, he murmured,

"Mother, is it you?—Oh! I thought I saw such strange faces—it must have been a dream—there were stars, and lovely rivers, and bright angels there beckoning me. Mother, could it have been heaven?"

"Oh! my child, don't talk so," was all the heart-broken parent could sob.

"Mother," said the little fellow after a pause, "I am so tired—let me lay my head on your bosom, as I used to when I was a baby like Charley—there, that is it—kiss me, mother—but where is father?—didn't some one say he was coming—why, oh! why don't he come?"

Not a voice could answer. We were all in tears, even the old physician, used as he was to such scenes.

"Oh! sister, mother, don't cry," said the little fellow touchingly, "you've often told me, mother, that heaven is a happy place, where bright angels sing all day long, and there is no cold or sickness or poverty. You shouldn't cry, if I'm going there—and by-and-bye, you'll all come too, won't you? Father, too, will be there—oh! I wish I could see him, if it's only for one kiss before I die—why, why don't he come?"

"Would—God—my dear—boy," sobbed the mother, chokingly, "he could—come—before—" she would have gone on, but alas! her overcharged heart would not let her speak.

"Oh! mother!" said the little fellow, looking up, and speaking, as I have often noticed in the dying, above his years; while his eyes gleamed

with a strange and fitful fire, "do you remember how happy we all used to be years ago, when we had that nice house in the country in summer, and father would take us such pretty walks, and we'd pluck such gay flowers, and at night you would hear us say our prayers, and sing sweet songs to lullaby sister and me, and laugh so at our play—you don't laugh any more, mother—I wonder if heaven can be as happy as that—I shall see sister Ellen there, shan't I, mother?—and oh! when I die, bury me in the country, in some spot like that where she was—and——"

But here—as his thoughts, in the wanderings of expiring intellect reverted to his absent father—his tone saddened, and instead of finishing his sentence, he murmured sadly, looking anxiously toward the door, "father, dear father, do come!" and then sank exhausted upon his mother's bosom.

For a moment we thought all was over. His eyes were closed, his arms rigid, his cheek unnaturally pale, and he scarcely seemed to breathe. All at once he opened his eyes, and looking up earnestly said,

"Hark!—he is coming," and instantly we heard a tread in the entry, the door flew open, and the long-looked-for father rushed into the room.

"My boy—my boy," was all he could gasp, rushing wildly to the bedside.

But he staggered back, as his eye took in the condition of the sufferer, and cried, "oh! my God, they have murdered you!" his heart-broken voice full of the bitterest agony.

"Hush, father—I am happy now," said the boy, with difficulty, "mother—sister—brother—kiss me—there, now—we shall meet in heaven—I hear the golden harps sounding."

"My child—my dear, angel Charley," sobbed the strong man, his frame shaking as in an ague fit.

"How cold—it—is," murmured the boy, "don't—don't leave me. It's—all dark. Your—hand—mo-o-ther," and with a gentle quiver of the face, he was dead.

For a moment a silence, deep and reverential, fell upon the room, while all gazed eagerly upon the pallid face, to see if the little fellow was indeed gone "where the weary are at rest." The awful hush was at length broken by the old physician, as he lifted his eye to heaven, and said devoutly,

"The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord!"

"Amen!" was all I could answer: but the poor father, who had stood like stone, gazing

upon his boy, now shivered in every limb, and casting himself frantically on the bed, while the stout frame shook under his convulsive twitches, sobbed aloud, and in the language of the Scripture, "would not be comforted." Even the tender words of his wife, who, overawed by his fearful emotion, seemed to lose all consciousness of her own bereavement, and think only of relieving his agony, were of no avail. Oh! how terrible is the strong man's grief. What to that father now, was liberty! His boy, his doted boy, was lifeless beside him, murdered, for want of that aid, which a few dollars would have secured. Can words picture the agony of such a moment?

The dear little fellow was buried, and buried

too as he had begged, where the birds might build above him.

What remains to be told? The father, through the old physician's influence, obtained a clerkship in a commercial house, rose gradually from station to station, and in little more than five years was living in comfort and ease.

But neither he, nor the mother, ever forgot their martyred boy. "To lose a child is always terrible," said he to me, years after, "but to lose one, who, but for a cruel law, might still have been living—oh! that is agony."

I pressed his hand, with tears in my eyes, and silently thanked God that imprisonment for debt was now abolished, almost everywhere in the United States.